



## Reviving the William Liddell Collection

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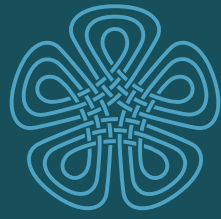
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Shuttles & Shafts

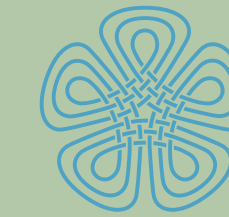
Reviving The William Liddell Collection

# ROADSHOWS

Stories and artefacts gathered at regional roadshows







Shuttles & Shafts

Reviving The William Liddell Collection

# ROADSHOWS

Stories and artefacts gathered at regional roadshows

The **Roadshows** books provide a glimpse of the wonderful artefacts and objects that were brought to the project's regional Roadshows. The roadshows provided an opportunity for local communities, families and individuals involved in the textile manufacturing industries to share their memories and stories of their working lives in factories across the province.





Three strategic locations were selected and promotion was through local networking and specifically targeted leaflets. The roadshows were facilitated by the Centre for Data and Digitisation Analysis (CDDA) Queen’s University Belfast.

ROADSHOW 1

# Ulster Folk & Transport Museum, Cultra

Saturday 29th July 2017

National Museums NI are Northern Ireland’s premier cultural, learning, and tourist destinations, holding Ireland’s largest public collection of costume and textiles. This launch roadshow was held in the Parochial Hall, Ulster Folk and Transport museum as part of the museums ‘Linen Day’ of activities and craft demonstrations.

The team set up in anticipation of discovering many interesting artefacts, literature and people. Trestle tables were laid showing a selection of the glass plates, their first showing since being cleaned and digitised. The public had been invited to bring any artefacts, memorabilia or stories to be recorded, photographed and digitised. It was a busy day which yielded some beautiful literature and photographs, many with their own personal stories which were carefully recorded backed up by artefacts being scanned into the system.



Barbara Dass & Fiona McKelvie



This Hincks print of winding and warping was shared from David Willis' collection

“Wherever Irish Linen is mentioned, the name of Liddell comes to mind. For Wm Liddell & Co, stands pre-eminent among linen makers today and has for the past century”.

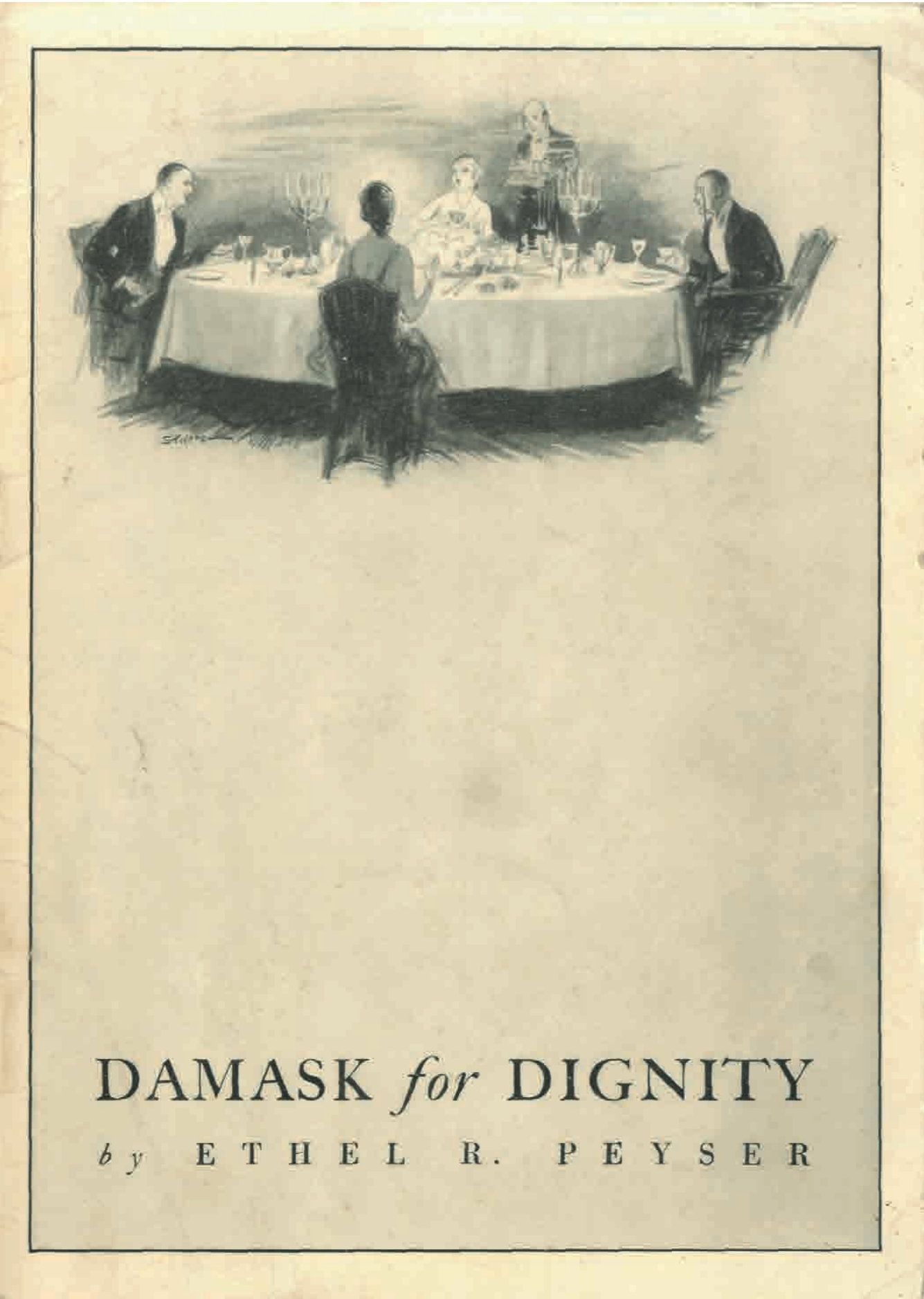


“This in short, is the story of the manufacturer of Gold Medal Linens made by Wm. Liddell & Co. Buy them – use them – but above all be happy with them”



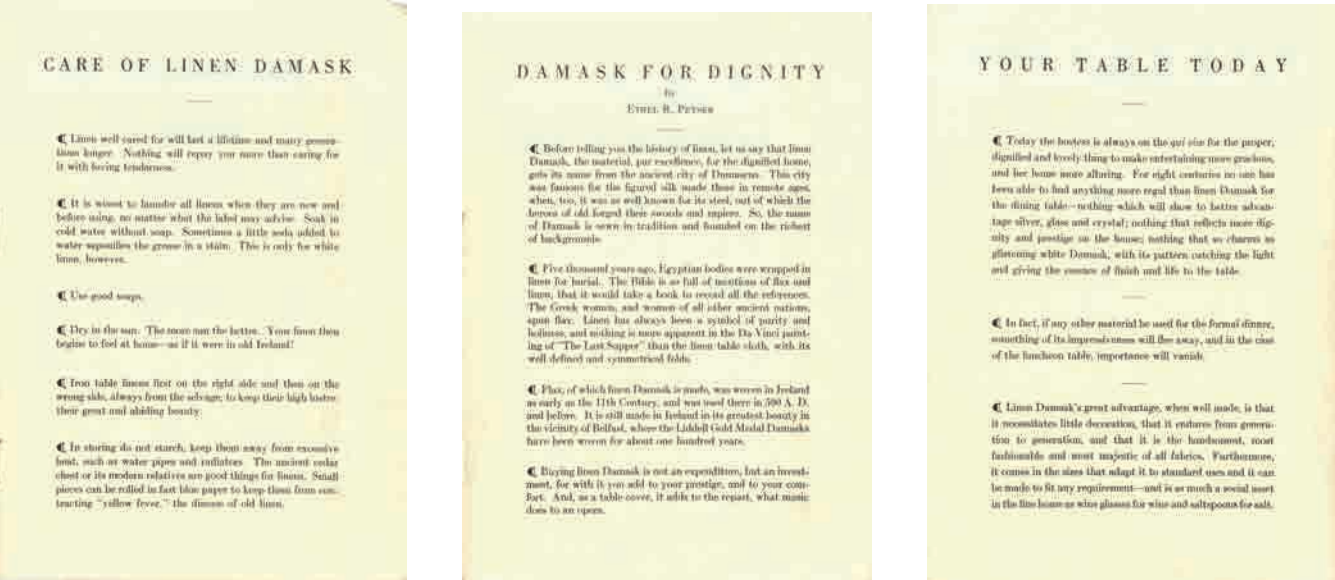
“In fact, if any other material be used for the formal dinner, something of its impressiveness will flee away, and in the case of the luncheon table, importance will vanish”.

Vision Support Services, the global textile company which acquired Hilden and Liddell in 2008 and still has offices in Lisburn and Blackburn in Lancashire, supplied some factual and poetic booklets. One example is the beautifully named leaflet ‘Damask for Dignity’ by Ethel R. Peysner (1887-1961) this was written for the American market.



“Flax, of which linen Damask is made, was woven in Ireland as early as the 11th Century, and was used there in 500AD and before. It is still made in Ireland in its greatest beauty in the vicinity of Belfast, where the Liddell Gold Medal Damasks have been woven for about one hundred years”.

“Dry in the sun. The more sun the better. Your linen then begins to feel at home – as if it were in old Ireland!”





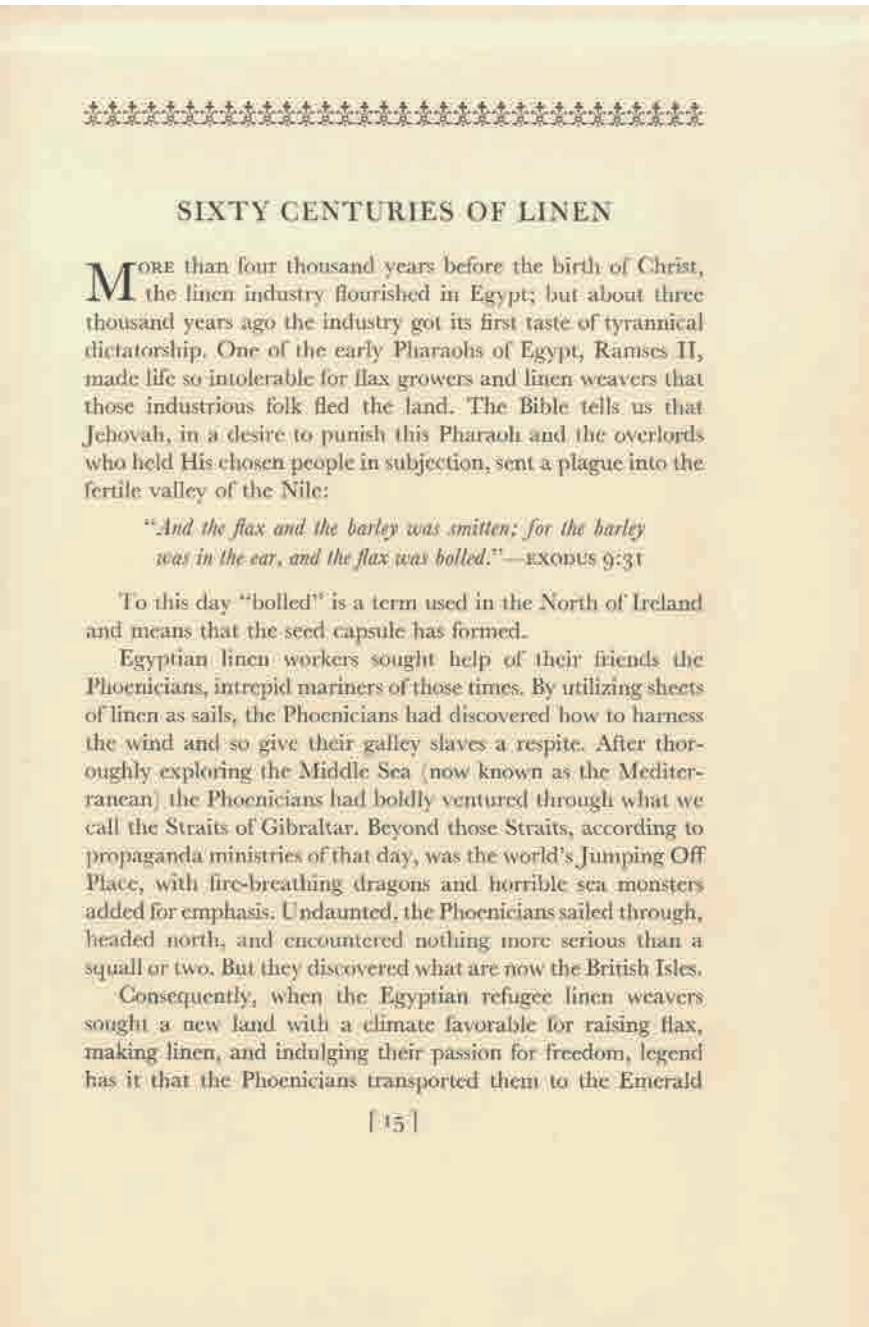
Further archive material supplied by Vision Support Services was an intriguing publication from the Fiftieth Anniversary of the Linen Trade Association 1891–1941, the event took place in The Warldorf-Astoria in New York on Friday, the 2nd May 1941. There were 62 pages of information, too much to include here, but insights into the content are:

*Biblical references featured regularly:*

“...and Solomon had horses brought out of Egypt and linen yarn: the king’s merchants received the linen yarn at a price”  
1 KINGS 10-28

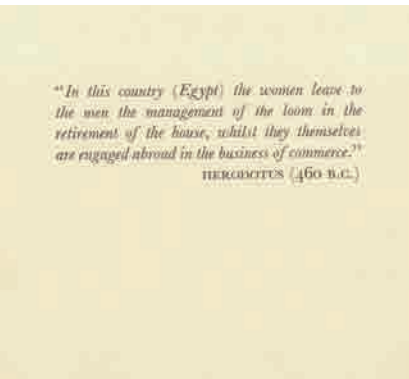
*Bolled as a process was referenced several times*

“To this day “bolled” is a term used in the North of Ireland and means the seed capsule has formed”

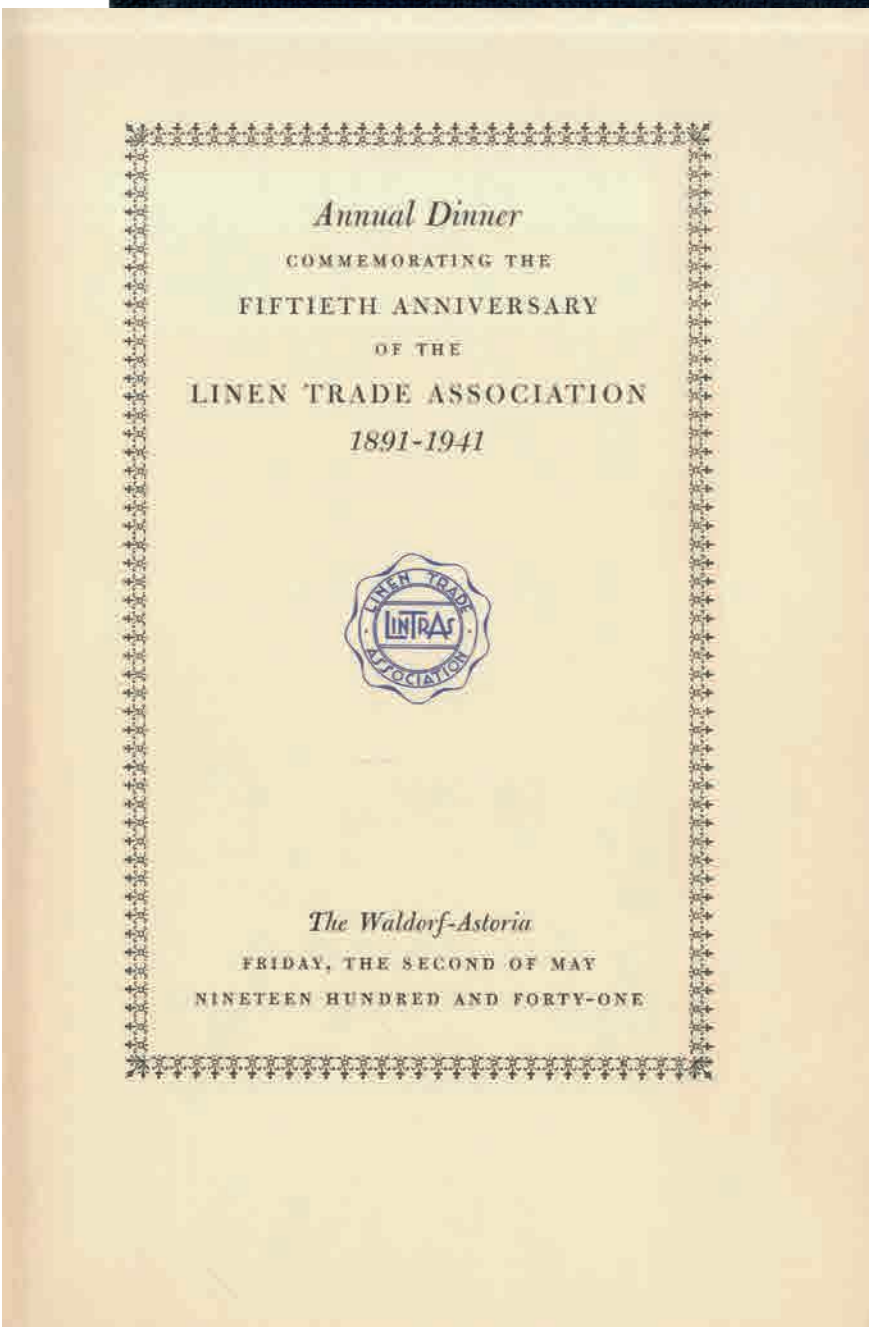
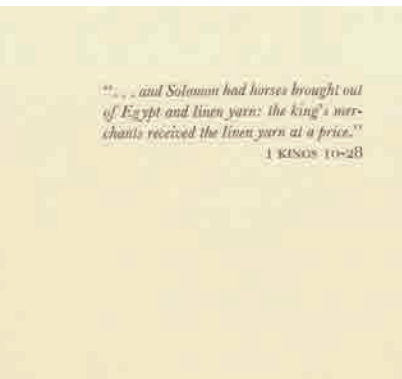


*Interesting reference to the roles of gender*

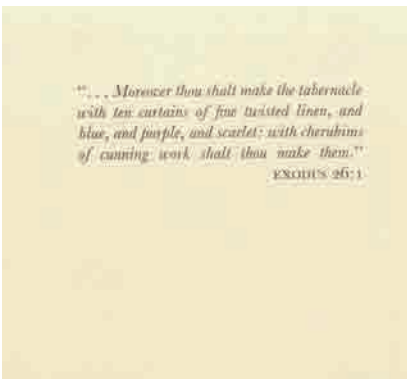
“In this country (Egypt) the woman leave to the men the management of the loom in the retirement of the house, while they themselves are engaged in the business of commerce”  
HERODOTUS (460 BC)



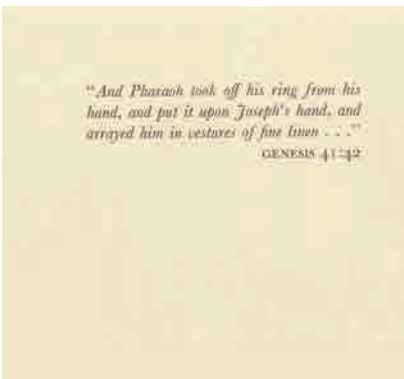
“And the flax and the barley was smitten; for the barley was in the ear, and the flax was bolled.”  
EXODUS 9:13



“Moreover thou shalt make the tabernacle with ten curtains of fine twisted linen, and blue, and purple, and scarlet: with the cherubins of cunning work shalt thou make them.”  
EXODUS 26:1

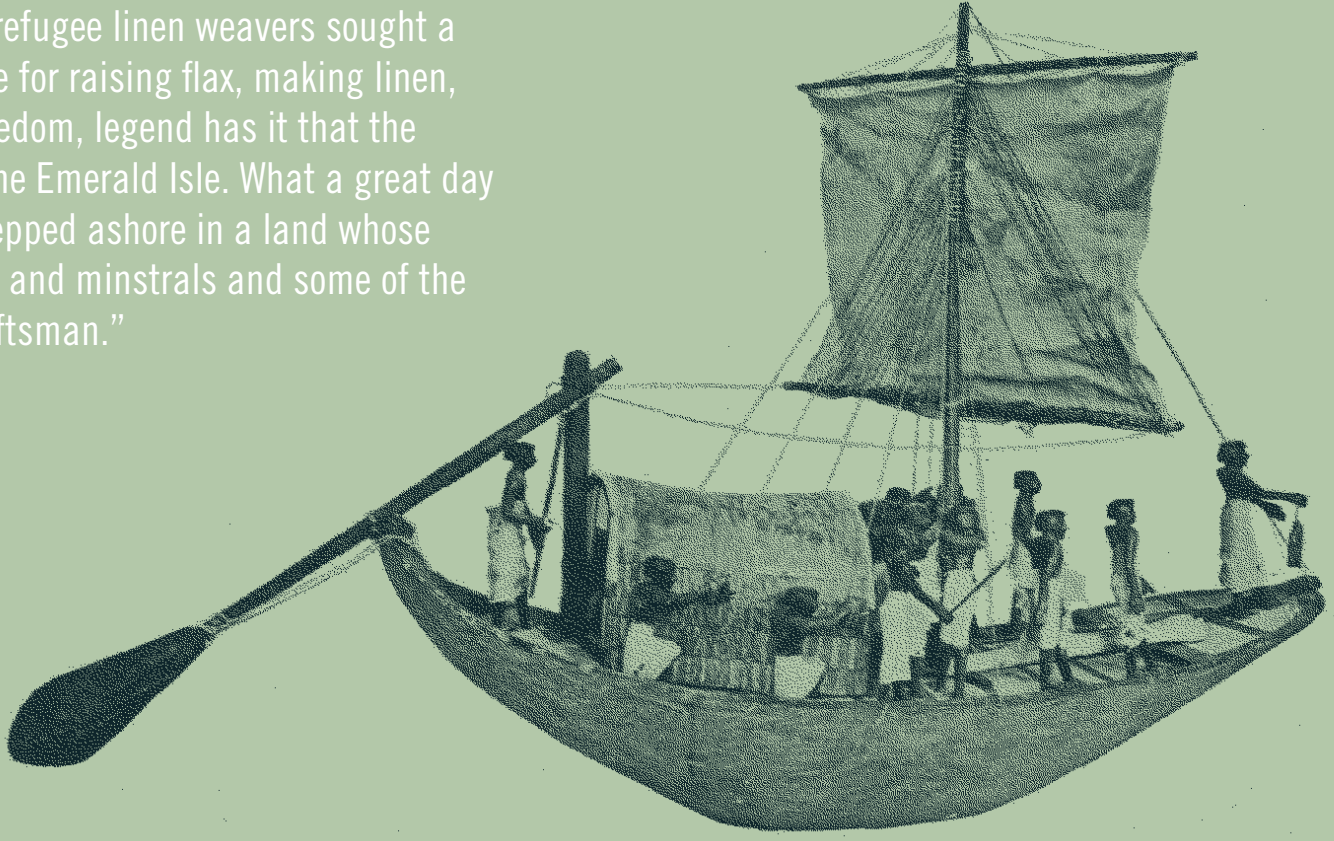


“And Pharaoh took off his ring from his hand, and put it upon Joseph’s hand and arrayed him in vestures of fine linen...”  
GENESIS 41:42



Other poetic references to the Island of Ireland are:

“Consequently, when the Egyptian refugee linen weavers sought a new land with a climate favourable for raising flax, making linen, and indulging their passion for freedom, legend has it that the Phoenicians transported them to the Emerald Isle. What a great day that must have been when they stepped ashore in a land whose beauty has inspired so many poets and minstrals and some of the world’s great artists and hand-craftsman.”



SIX THOUSAND YEAR OLD MODEL YACHT



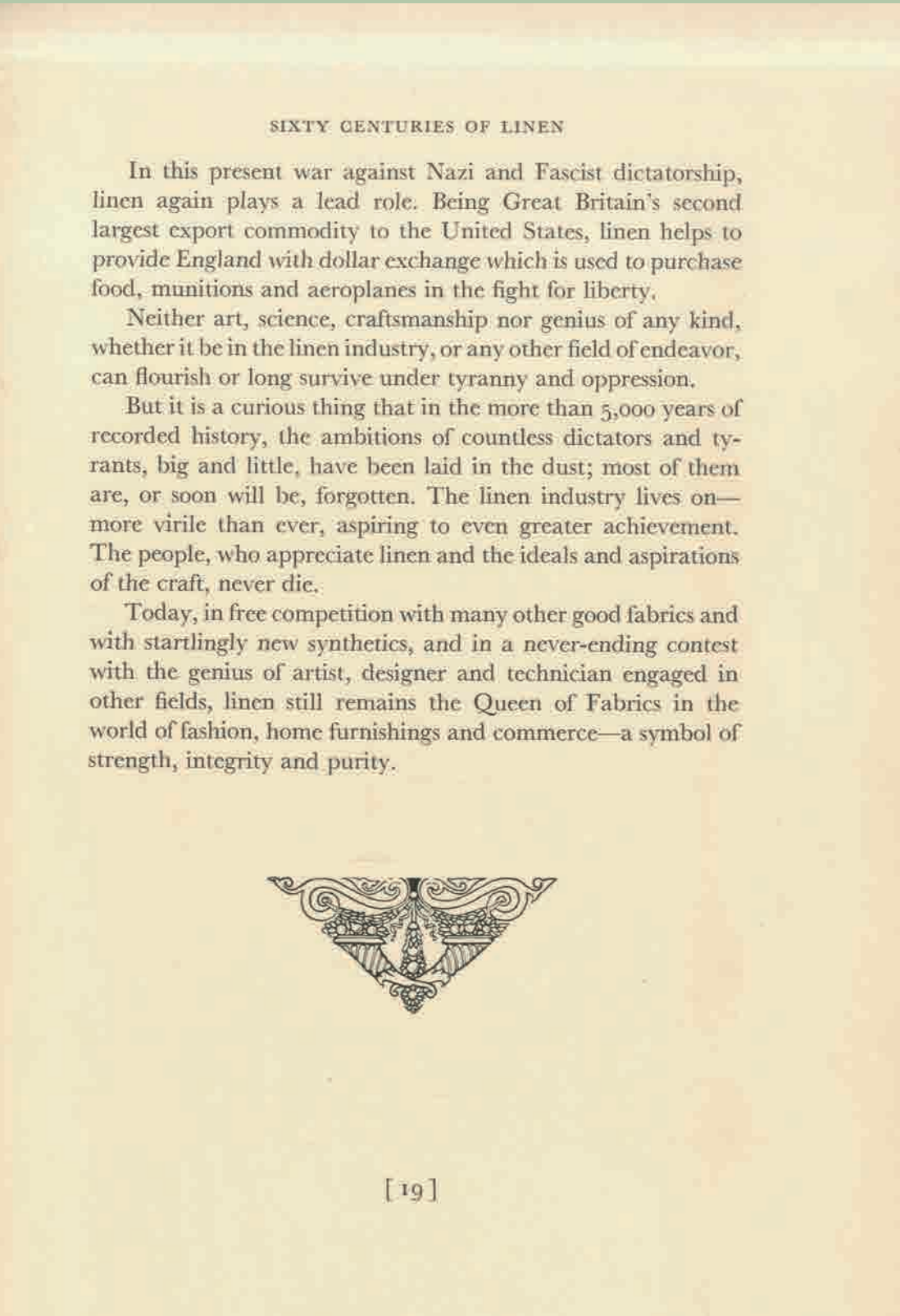
FOUR THOUSAND YEAR OLD LINEN FACTORY

“But it is a curious thing that in the more than 5,000 years of recorded history, the ambition of countless dictators and tyrants, big and little, have been laid in the dust; most of them are, or soon will be, forgotten. The linen industry lives on – more virile than ever, aspiring to even greater achievement. The people, who appreciate linen and the ideals and aspirations of the craft, never die.”

“Neither art, science, craftsmanship nor genius of any kind, whether it be the linen industry, or any other field of endeavour, can flourish or long survive under tyranny and oppression.”

How inspiring to think that Ireland was referenced in such glowing terms in 1941 at an annual dinner in The Waldorf Astoria. Further references discuss problems of political unrest.

“The records fail to tell us, but Rames 11 undoubtedly lived to regret losing the linen industry through the careless application of the tax laws and the bullwhip.”

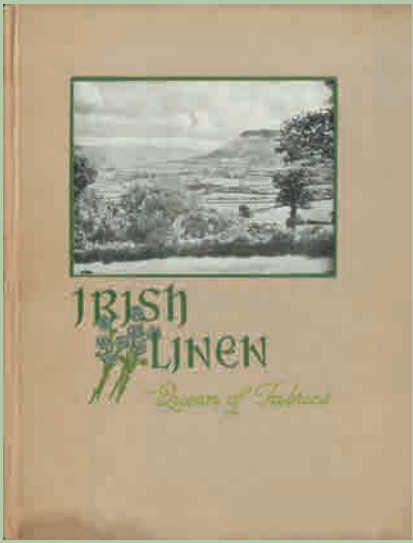
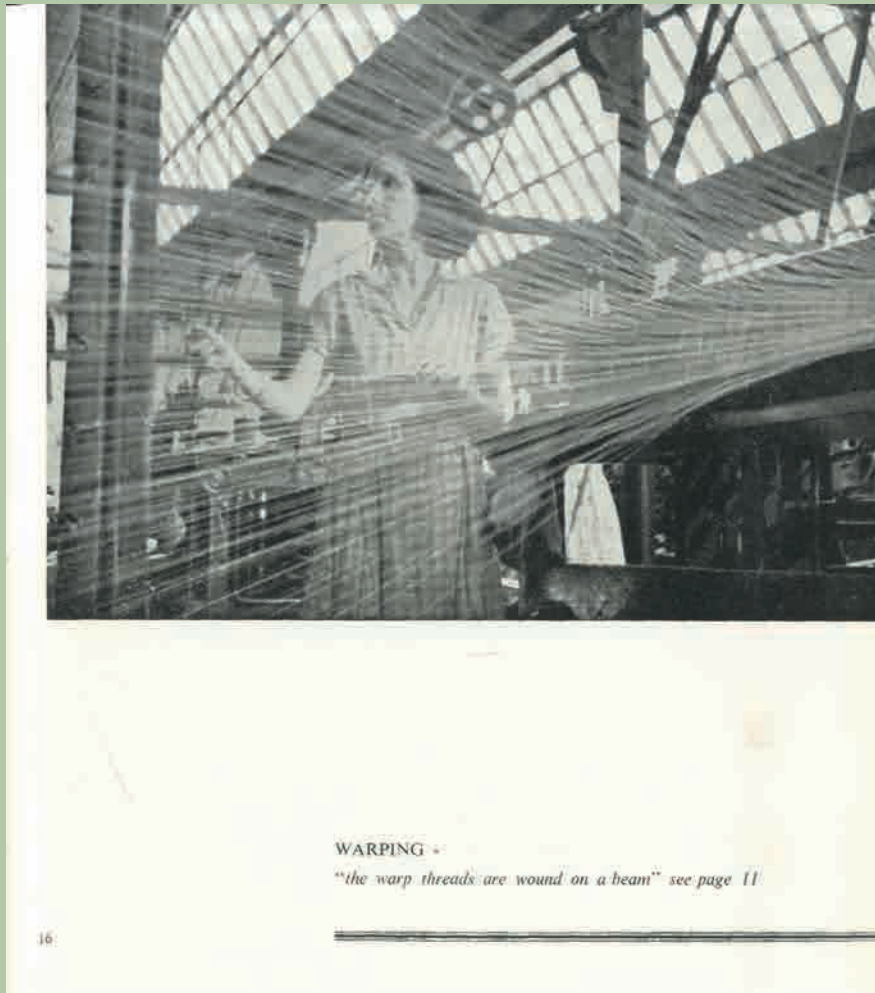




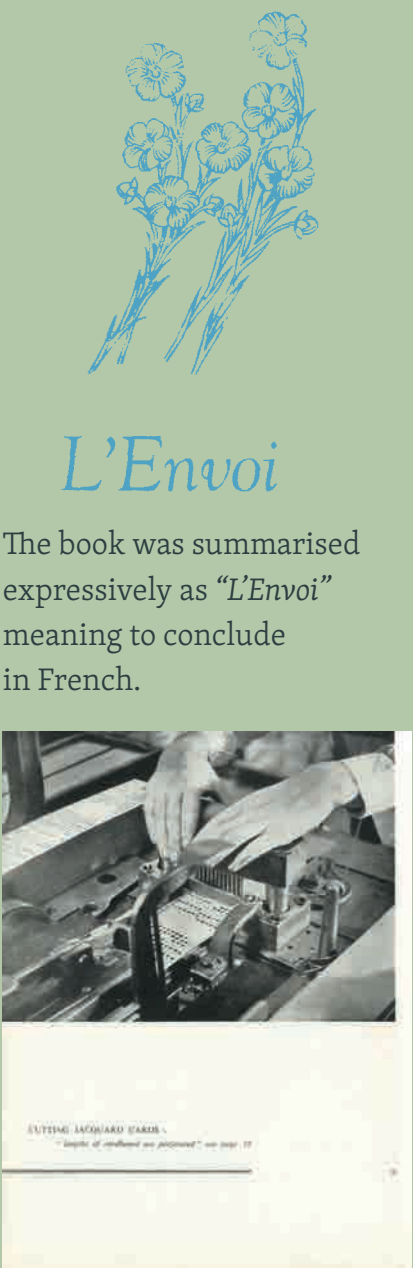
The Linen Trade Association commemoration continues to document many historical highlights too numerous to mention, however the last snapshot is a piece recounting the making of a film;

1936 – Irish Linen Film

“Late in 1936, the Association received a copy of a motion picture film entitled “The Wee Blue Blossom,” which had been prepared for promotional purposes by the Irish Linen Guild of Belfast. After considerable negotiation, the ownership of this film was transferred, in 1937, to the Universal Pictures Corporation where it was revised with a new script narrated by Lowell Thomas, famous American radio and screen commentator. Under a new title, “The Cloth of Kings,” the film was widely distributed as an educational short in first class motion picture theatres throughout the United States and Canada.”



This publication offers images that illustrate the manufacturer of linen as importantly as the people behind the process.

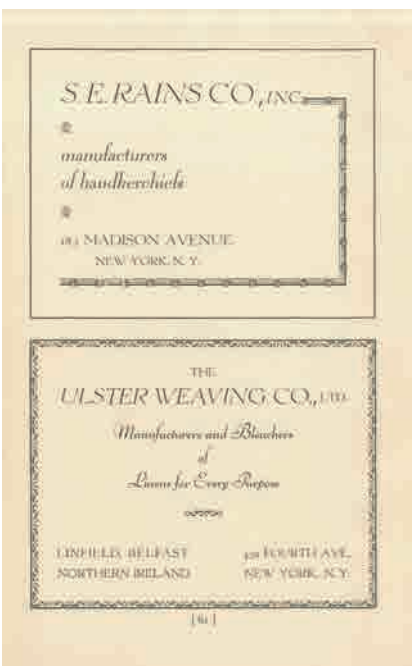
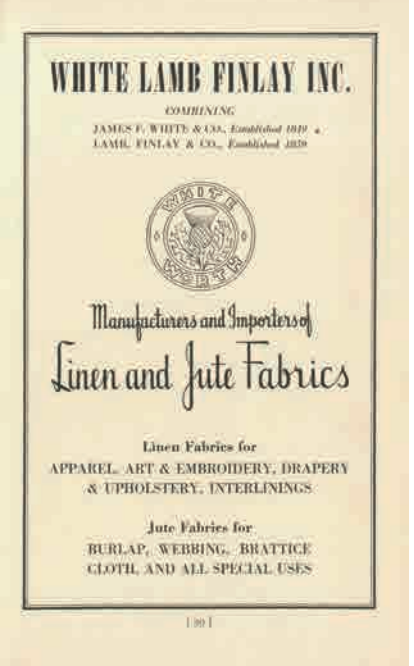
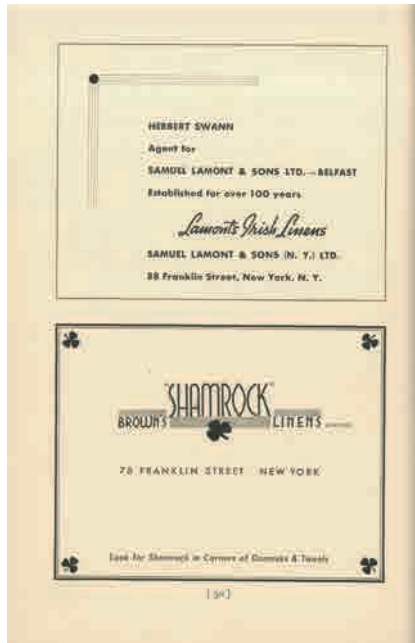
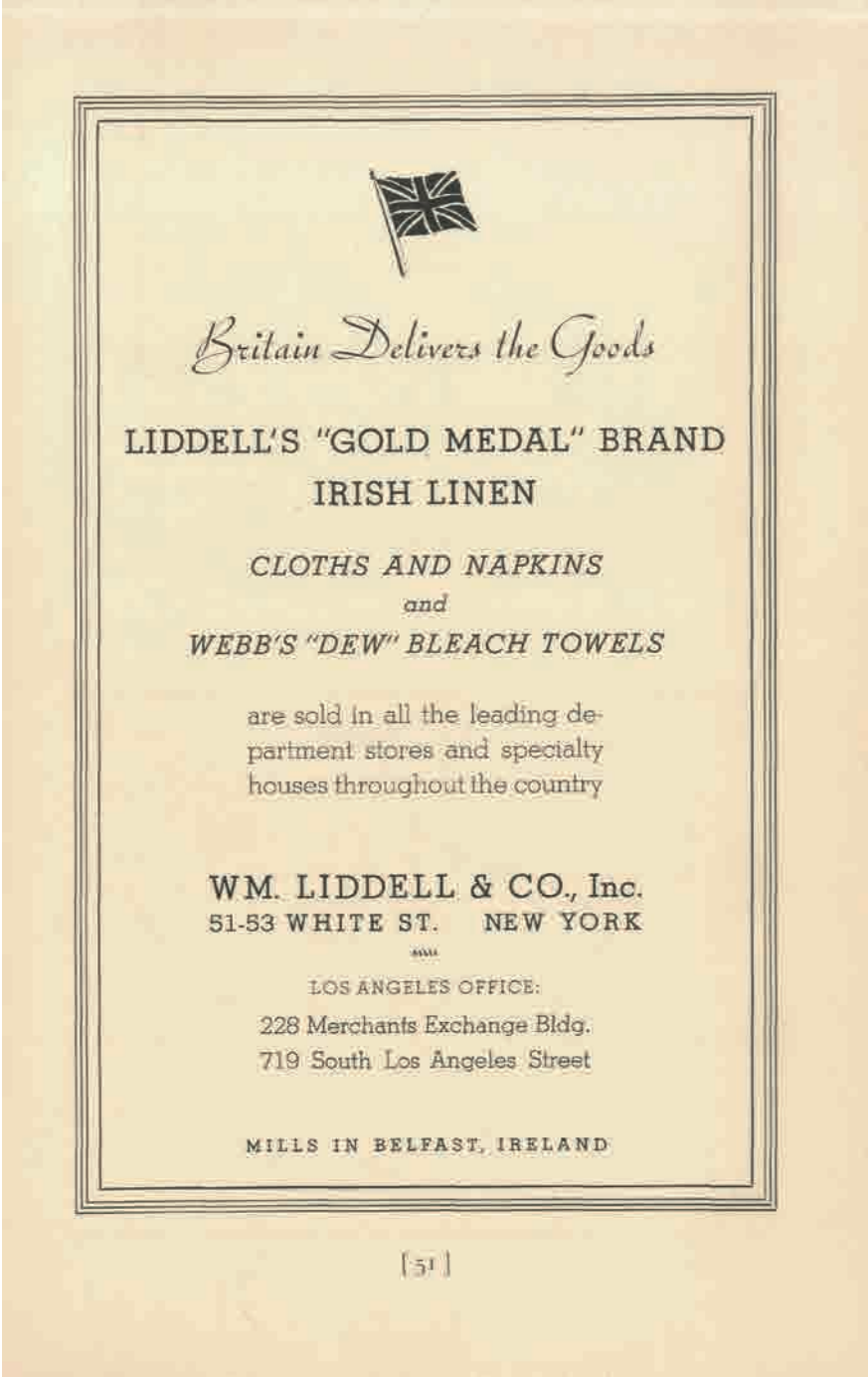
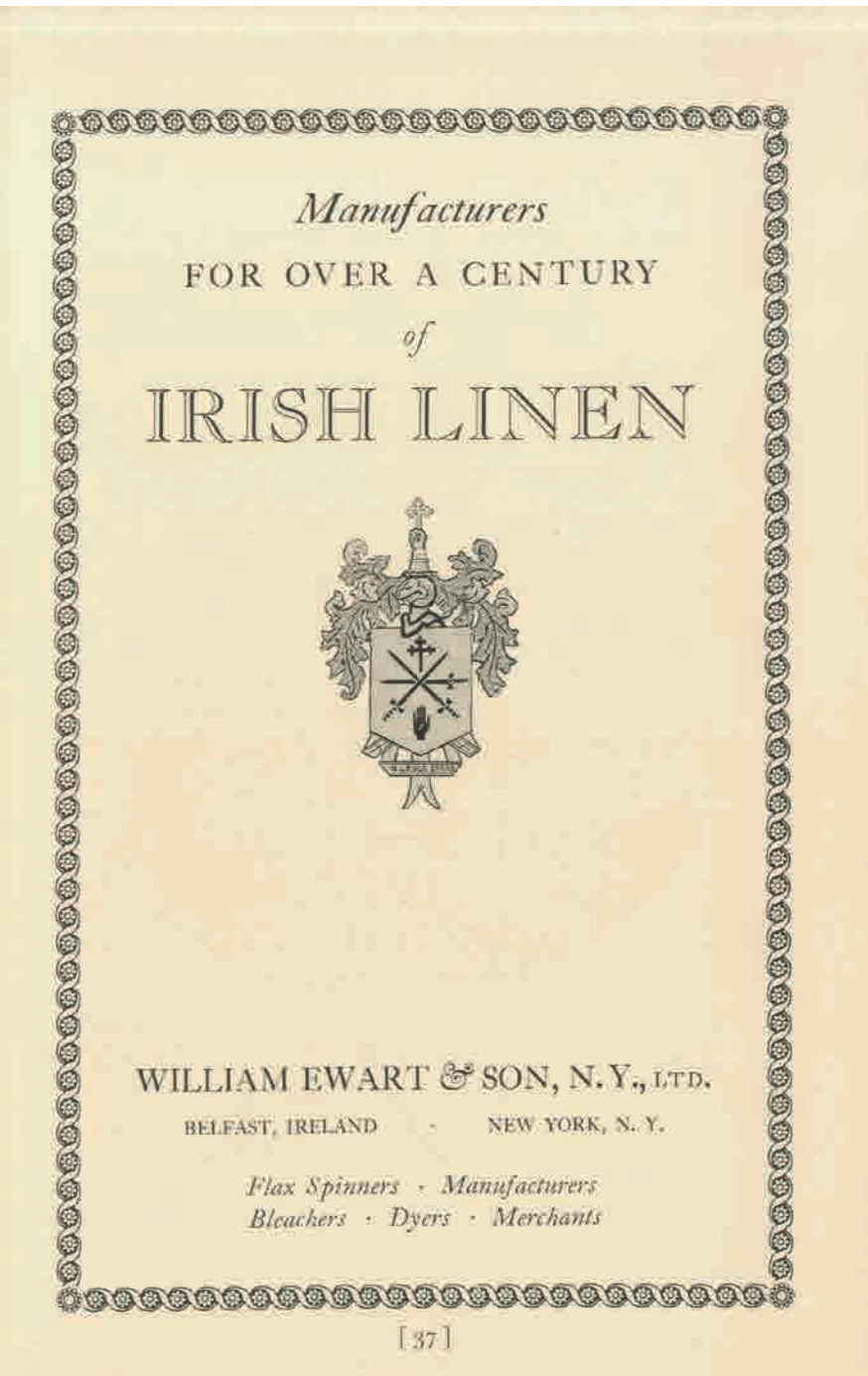
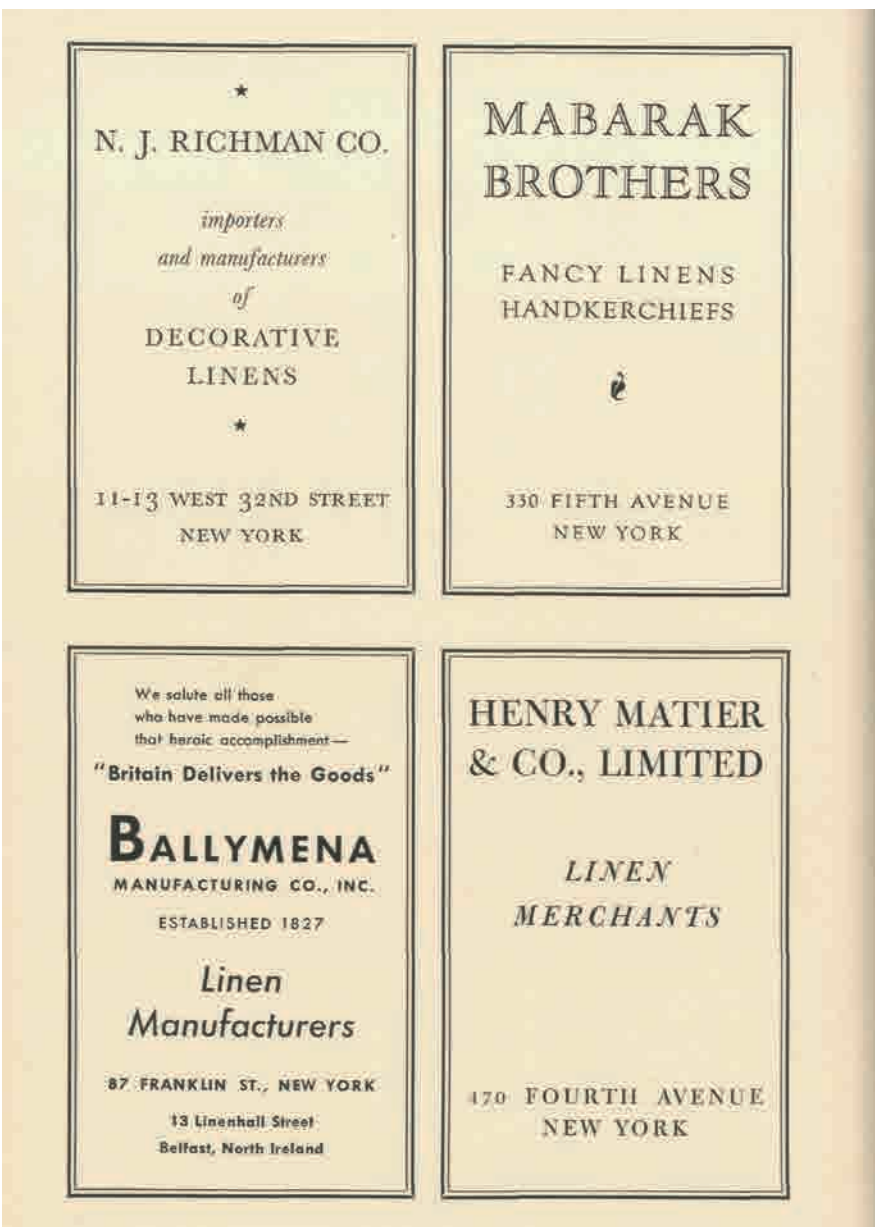
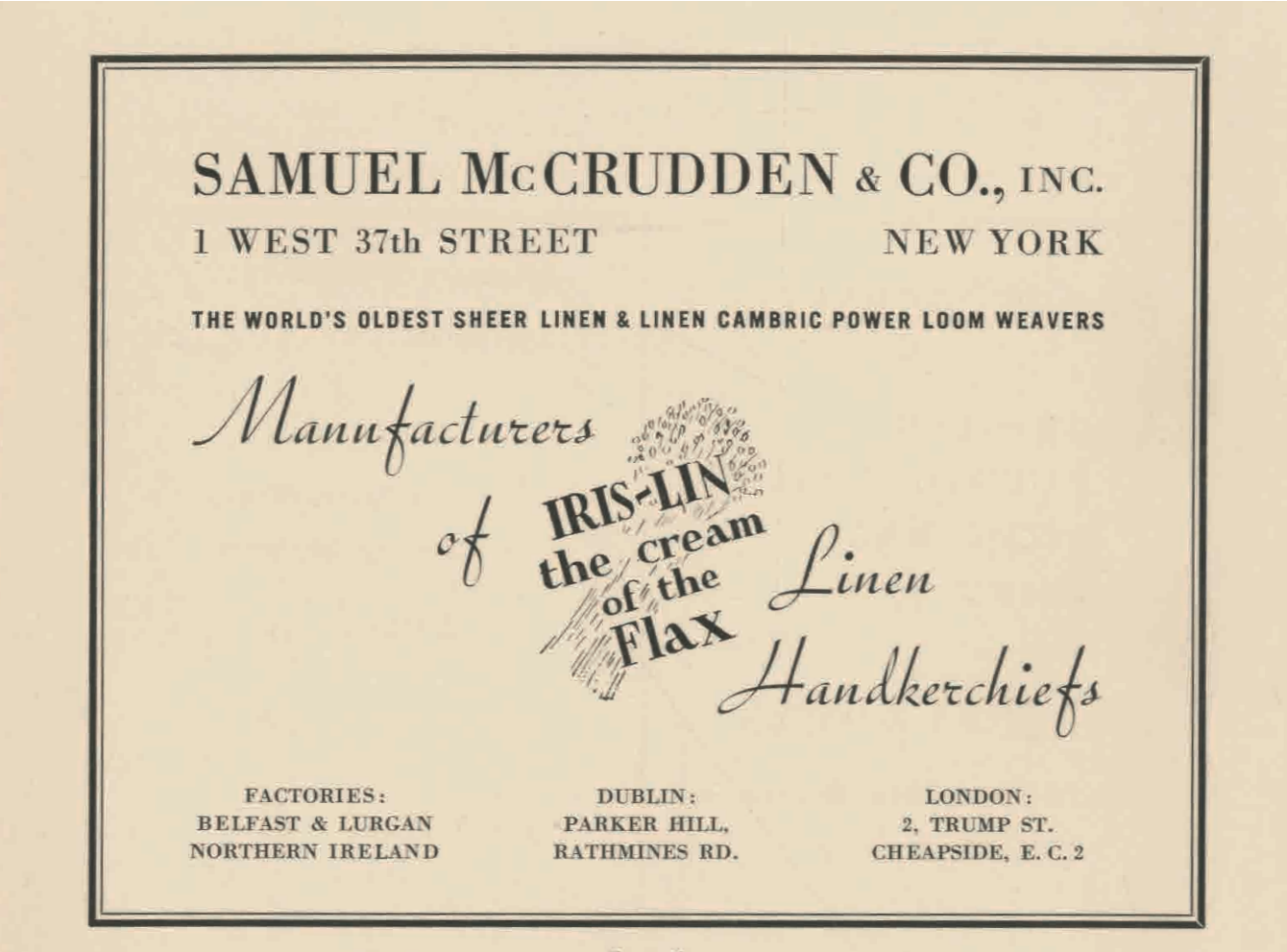


Fiona McKelvie provided some beautiful documents that record the making and history of Irish Linen, too many to go through in detail. Of particular interest was “Irish Linen – Queen of fabrics”, published by THE IRISH LINEN GUILD, with a foreword by Her Grace the Duchess of Abercorn D.B.E in 1937. Many of the evocative images are used in “The wee blue blossom film” This book is distinct in that it represents the complete story of Irish linen manufacturer. Avoiding heavy text, it simply lays out before the reader the narrative associated with the industry.

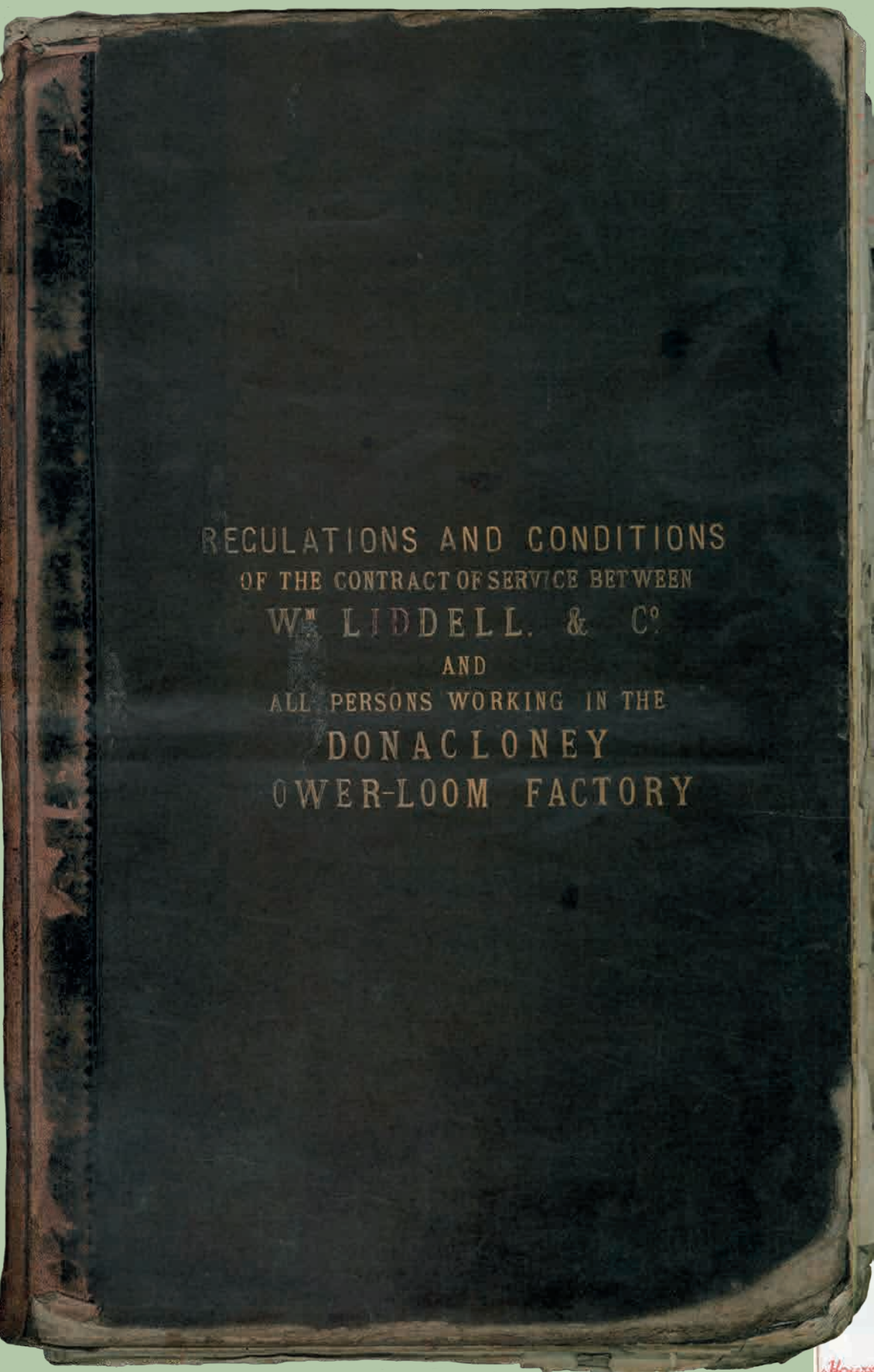
“The creation of Irish Linen begins amid the charming scenery of the Irish countryside...”



The final pages of this comprehensive report are a series of beautiful labels, artworks in their own right, and a testimony to the breadth of US interest in Irish Linen.

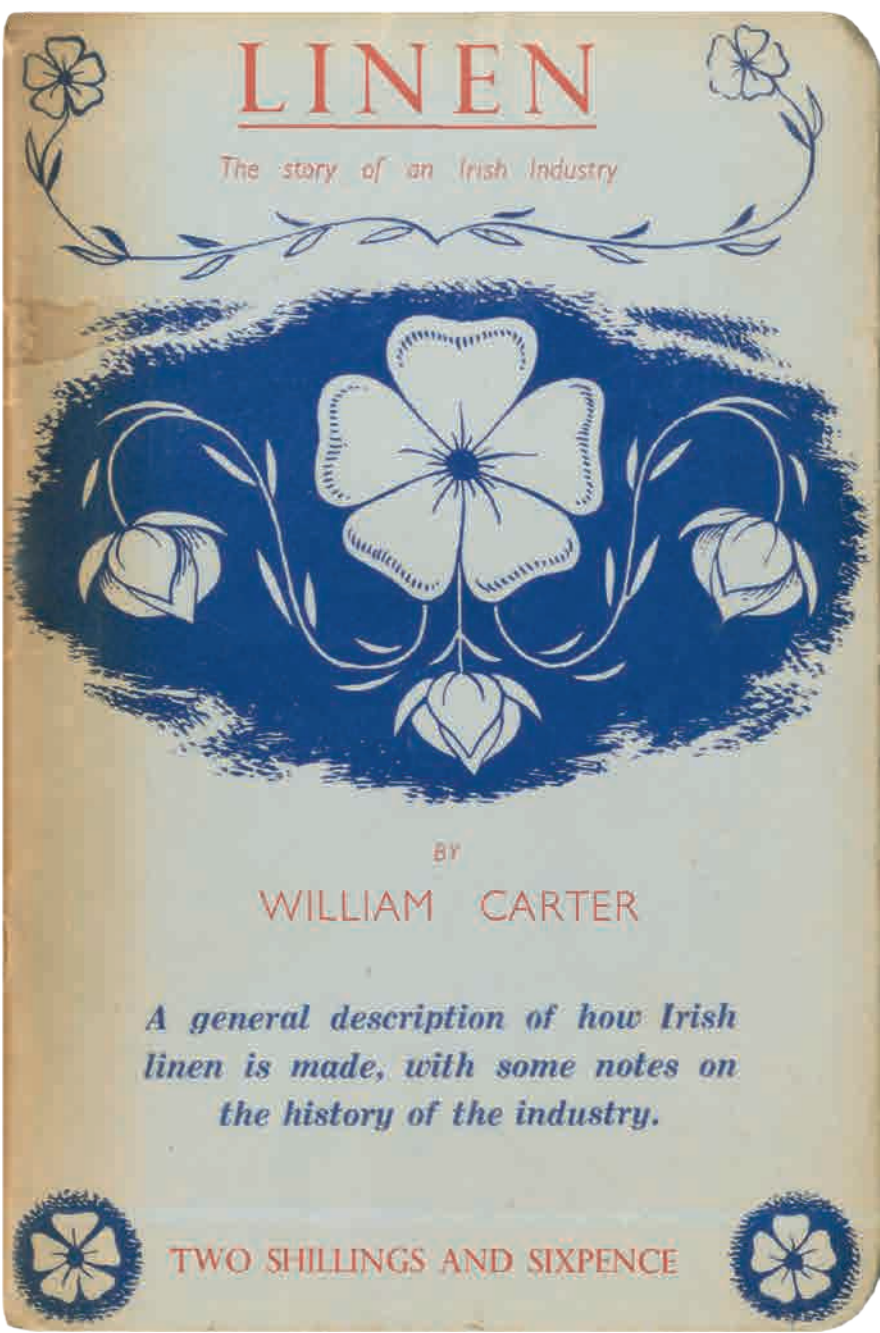
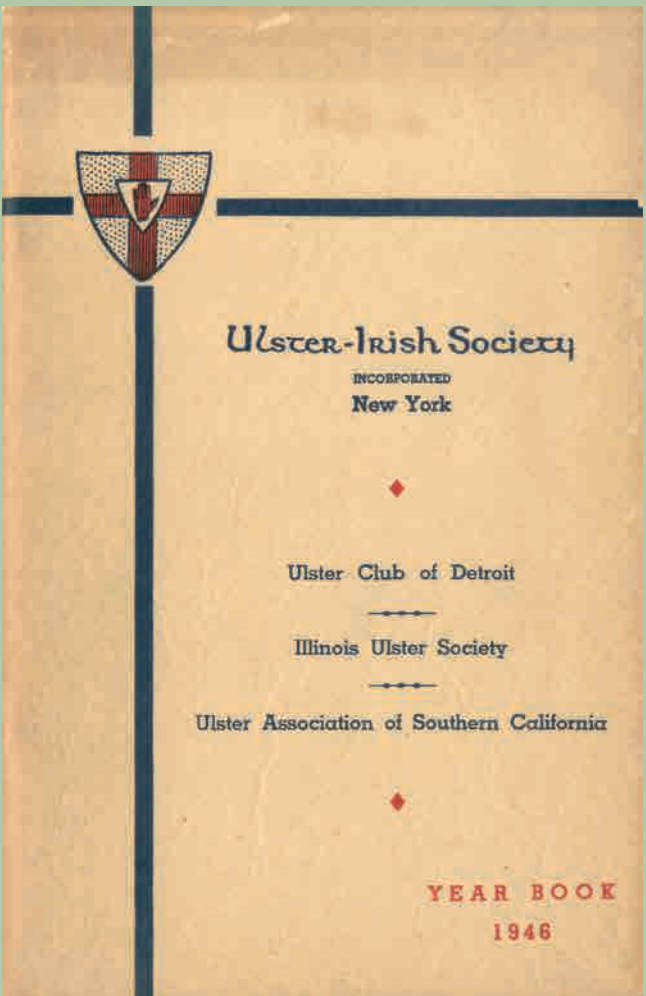
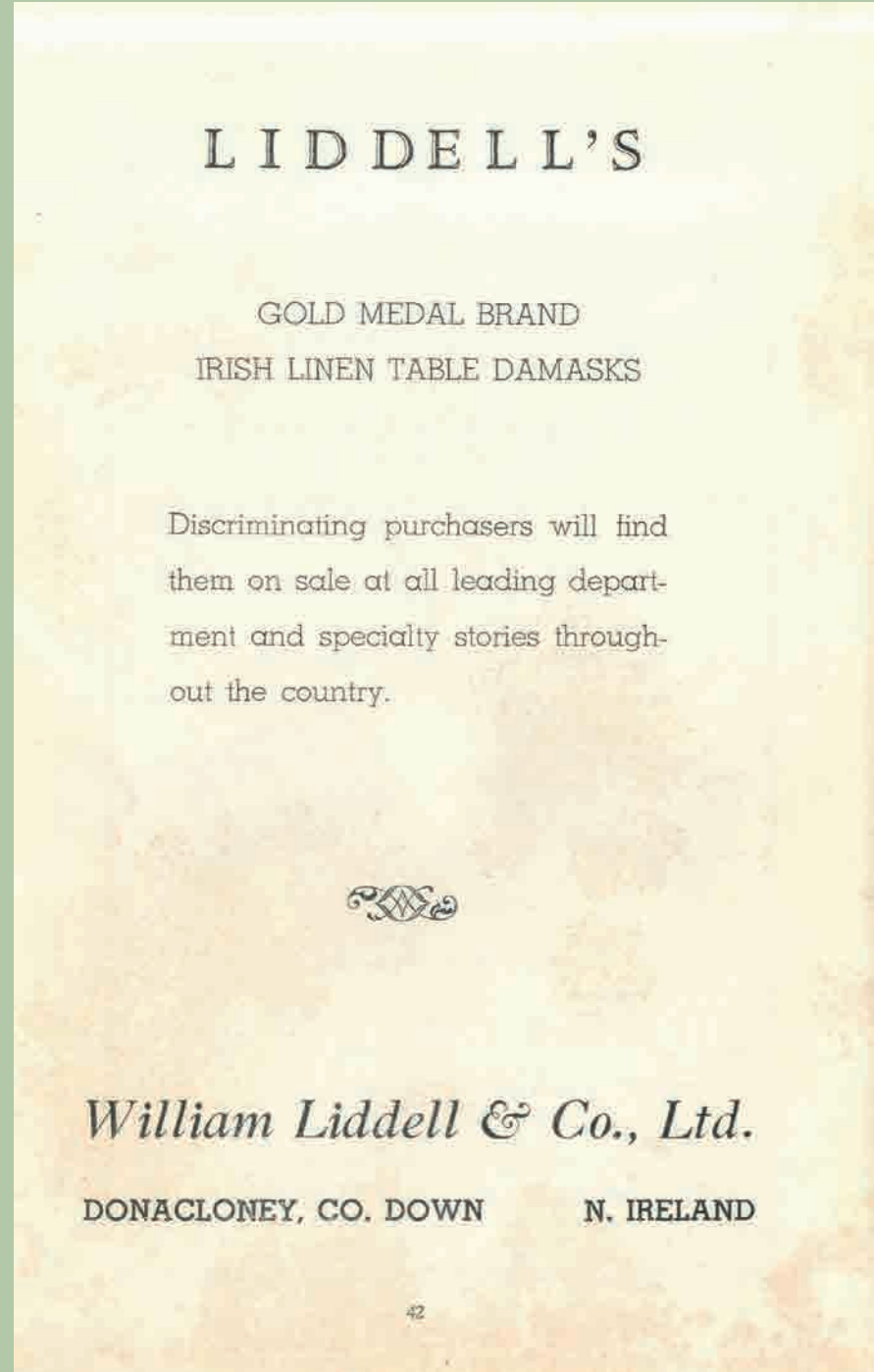
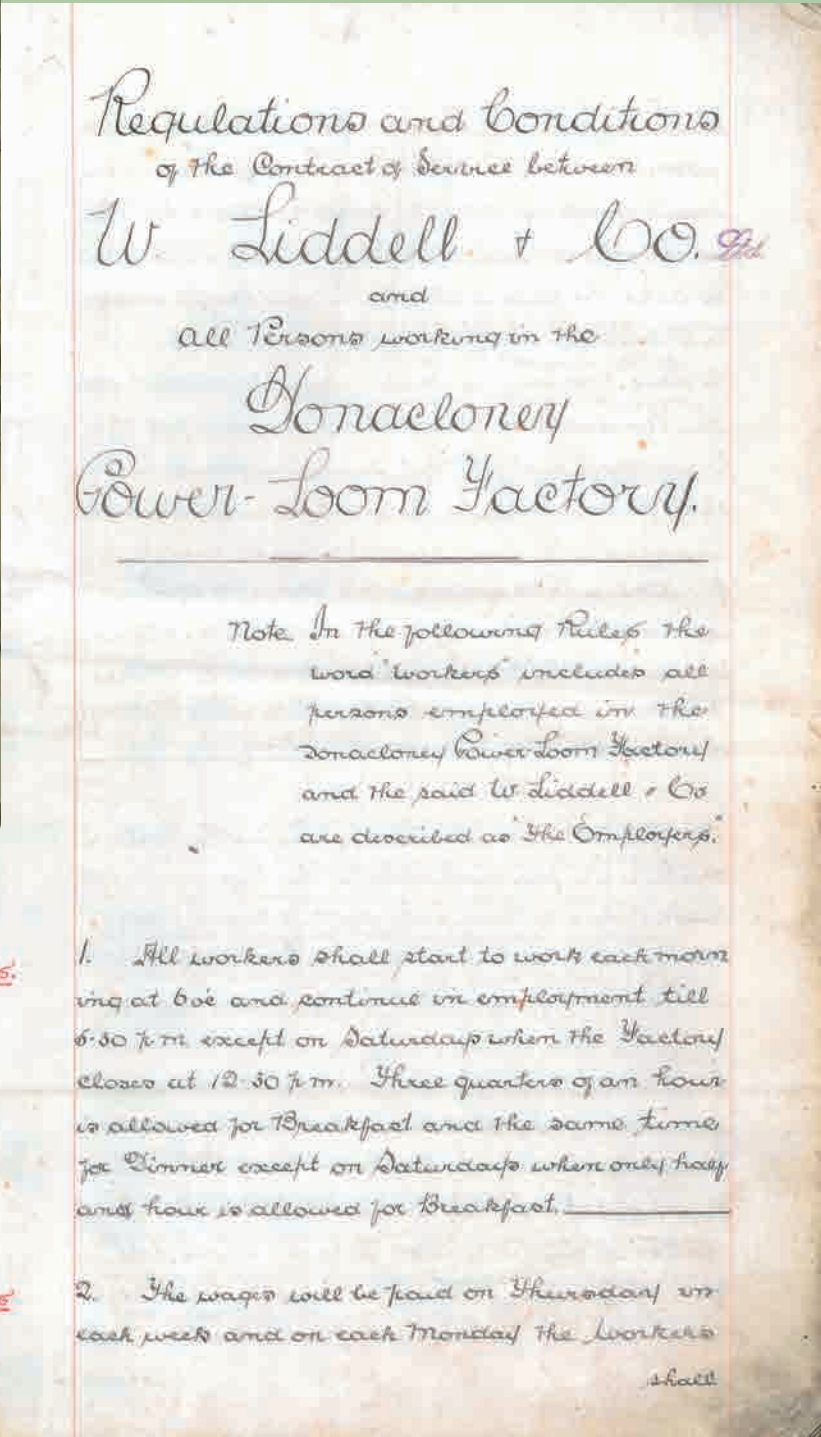






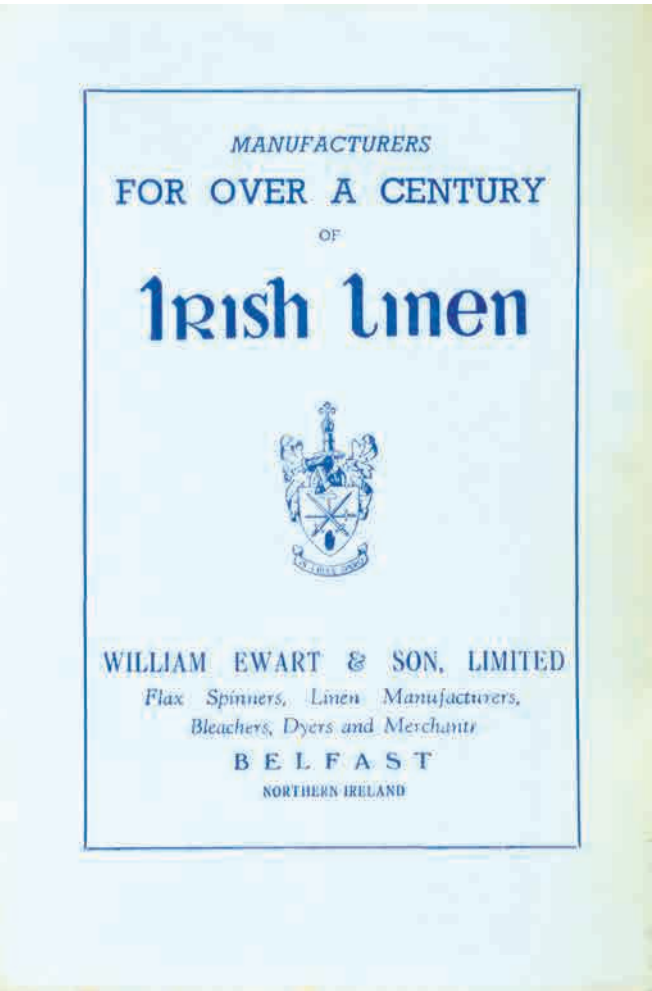
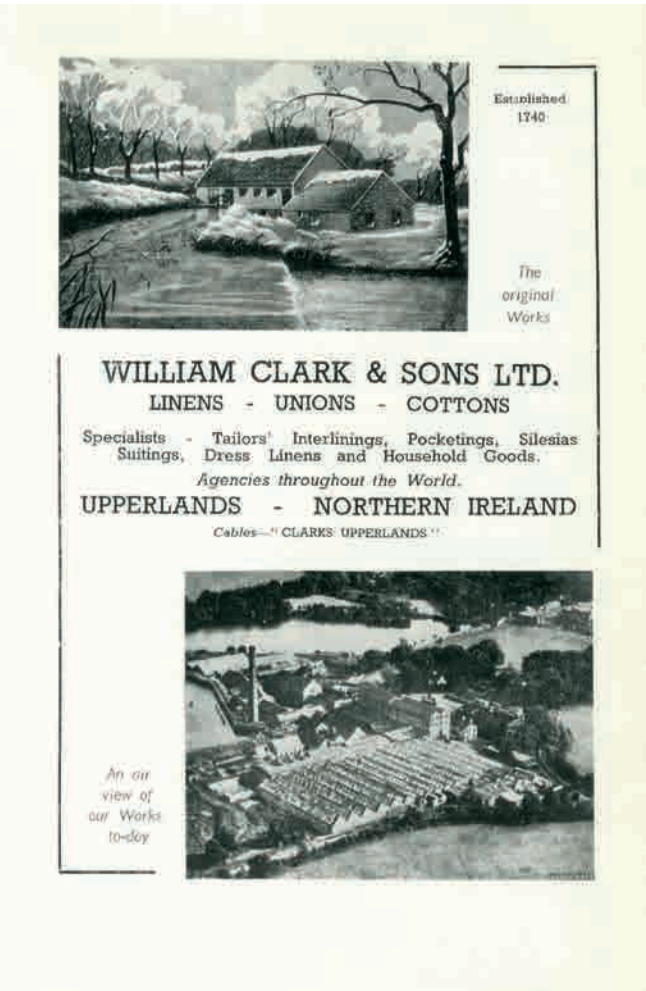
“Regulations and Conditions”, also supplied by VISIONS SUPPORT SERVICES provided interesting insight into the documentation and environment of “all persons working in the Donacloney Power Loom Factory”

Hours 1. “All workers shall start to work each morning at 6am and continue in employment till 5.30pm except on Saturdays when the Factory closes at 12.30p.m. Three quarters of an hour is allowed for Breakfast and the same time is allowed for Dinner except on Saturdays when only half an hour is allowed for Breakfast”



This Heritage Lottery funded project has garnered support from a wide range of people connected with the Linen Industry, one supporter is **Fiona McKelvie**, originally from Belfast but now living in London, she runs a website **McBURNEYANDBLACK.COM**, specialising in the sale of antique and vintage linens. Her stock focuses primarily on Irish Linen showcasing some unusual and special pieces.

Fiona also supplied “*Linen; The story of an Irish Industry*” by William Carter, this was a general description of how Irish Linen is made. One illustration depicts an early advertisement from **THE WILLIAM CLARK & SONS LTD** business, who are still in existence and beetling, a process where the linen is dampened and wound round an iron cylinder producing a hard surface with a high lustre. It is also featured in the “*Irish Linen Queens of fabrics*” literature.

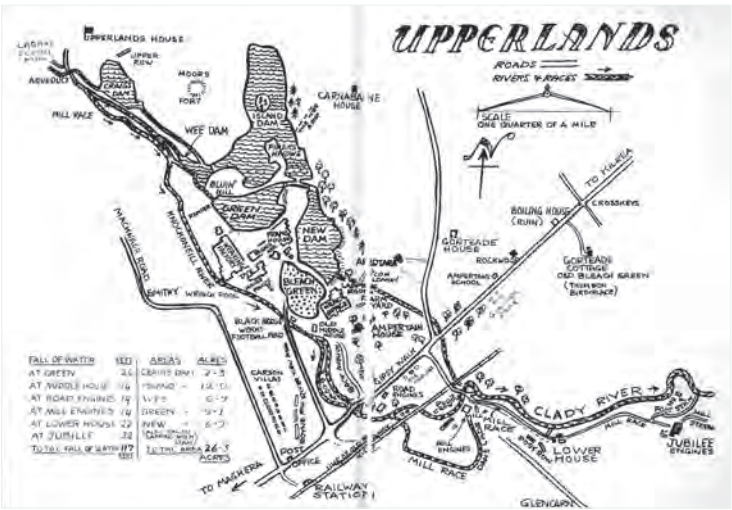


The complexity of weaving these stories, documents and narrative has revealed many complex overlaps, both within the Northern Irish landscape and wider afield. The abundance of local interest combined with the global reach is illustrated by the wealth and diversity of information brought to this roadshow. William Clark based in Upperlands, still operates as a working mill, and it was wonderful, to have a visit from Bruce Clark, who has a keen interest and wealth of knowledge on the Linen Industry. Bruce kindly copies new edition copies of “*Linen on the Green*” written by his father Wallace Clark, a classic account of the 300 year old linen village of Upperlands.

It traces the story of the Clark family and their involvement in linen over nine generations. It also describes the surrounding community and makes an important contribution to the social history. Uniquely among textile dynasties of the north of Ireland, the Clarks span many different phases of the linen story. They began in the 18th century as people who applied simple water-driven machinery to process and finish cloth, notably by bleaching and beetling it. In those early days, the cloth was marketed via Dublin and sent on to England and then the New World. The Clarks survived the boom and bust of the Napoleonic wars and were well placed to benefit from the mechanisation and globalisation which gathered pace in the 19th century. The book tells the story of Harry Jackson Clark, a gifted salesman and engineer who made his first sales trip to America in 1888-89 and helped over the next two decades to increase the firm’s turnover by a factor of ten, reaching £400,000 in 1914. Bruce Clark produced the new edition in 2016, celebrating the fact that in several different ways, the village of Upperlands continues to flourish with a lively visitor’s centre and an ongoing business that produces stunning furnishing fabrics and interlining for bespoke tailors.

Bruce delightfully dedicates the book to

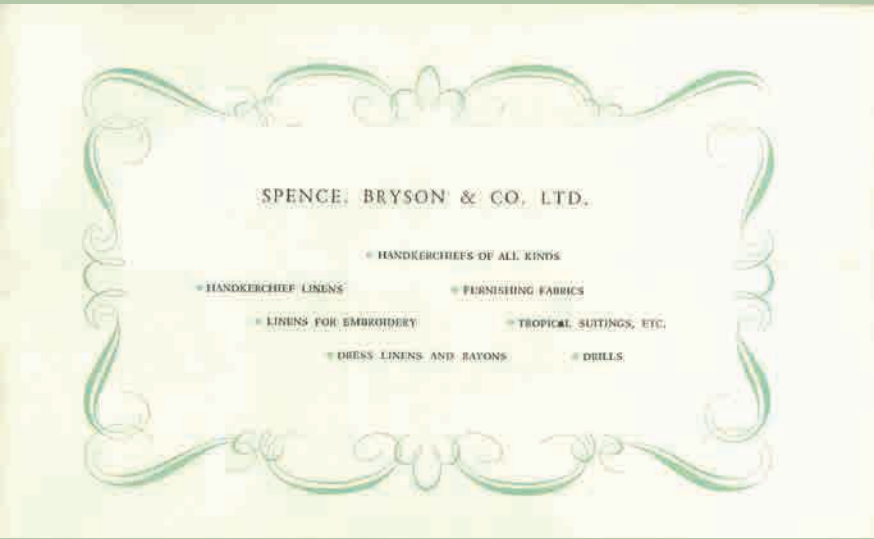
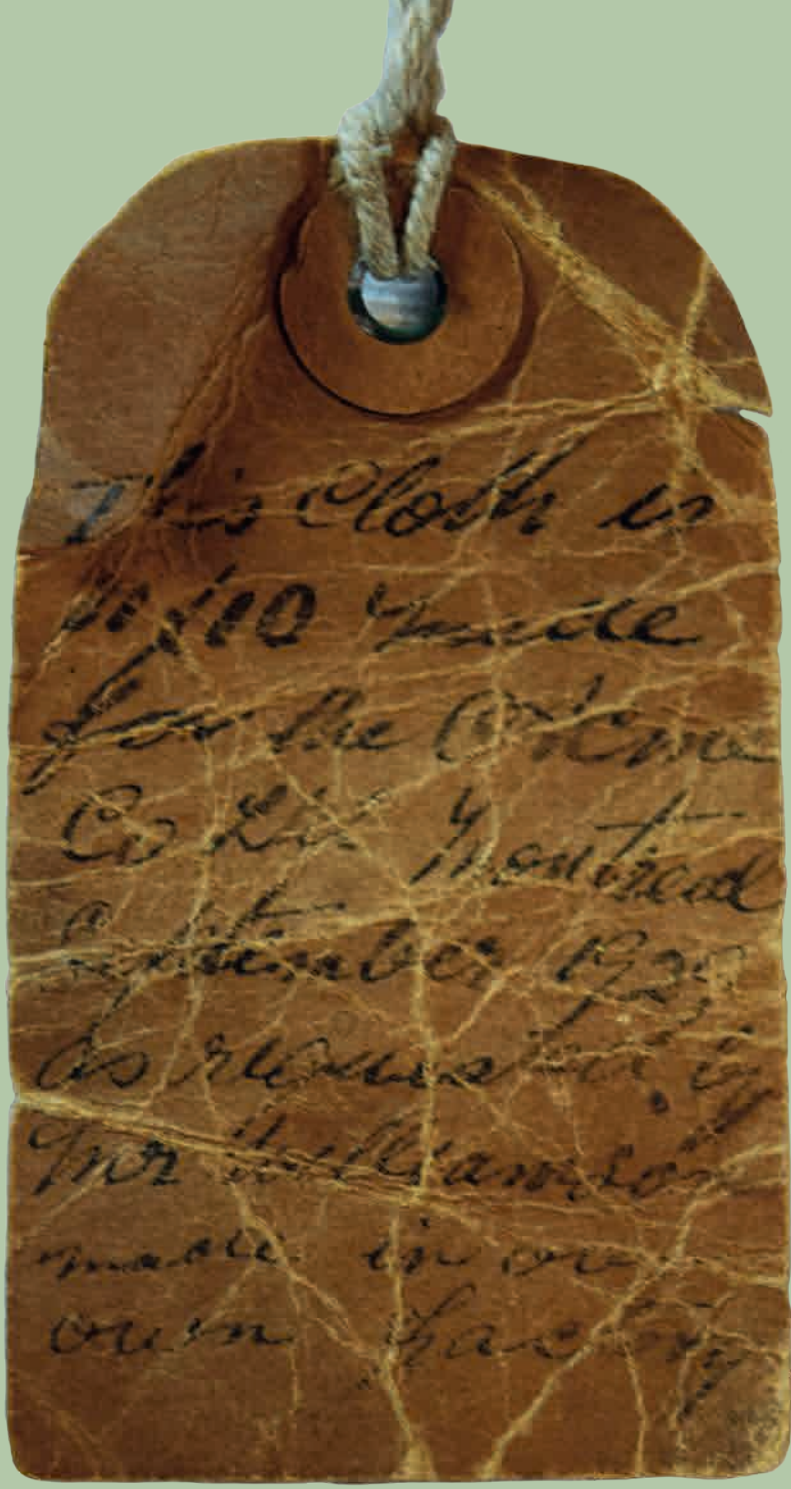
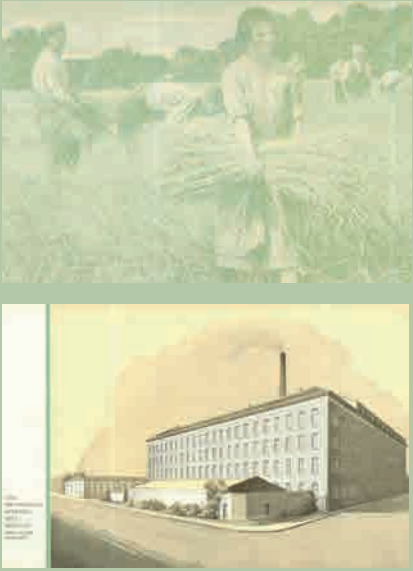
“To the Clady River Which has clothed and fed us all in Upperlands For 300 years”





**Marion Baur** from **FLAXMILL DUNGIVEN** arrived with spun linen yarn, unspun flax, crocus dyed yarn from the 1930s and a section of a descriptive label dated 1928, a treasured gift to Marion from **Wallace Clark**. The label was difficult to decipher, but **Leona Ferris** at **THE DUNGIVEN LIBRARY** was able to provide a translation.

Marion and her husband **Hermann Glaser-Baur** are very passionate flax growers and linen weavers, intent on looking forward to keep the tradition alive. Glaser-Baur relates how when visiting **WILLIAM CLARK** 16 miles down the road the employees “*faces beam to receive homegrown, home-woven linen before beating it to a sheen*” as reported by **Jonathan Foyle** in a **FINANCIAL TIMES** article “*picking up the threads*” (15<sup>th</sup> September 2017)



Although this project is primarily connected to the glass plates from **WILLIAM LIDDELL** the call for the roadshows was related to all aspects of the linen industry, as all of the mills gave Northern Ireland its unique place in the history of Linen. In this digital age, it was encouraging to see so many scrap books being brought in by younger members of the family. **Jayne McClenaghan** produced a lovely visual archive of **THOMAS AUSTIN** (1911-1982) who from school started as a weaver for **SPENCE BRYSON** and worked his way up as a head cloth passer. **SPENCE BRYSON** located in Portadown have been making handkerchiefs since 25<sup>th</sup> July 1891.

“This cloth is 11/10 made by Acme Co Ltd, Montreal Sept 1928 as requested by Mr Williamson. Made in our own factory”



The Cultra Roadshow brought so many people, artefacts, stories and the sense was people just still loved to gather and talk the linen talk. We are grateful to the Museum for facilitating this event, the first of the roadshows, starting out with no idea what would uncovered.

**Sam Fleming** who aged 14 started at **HENRY CAMPBELLS** at Mossley Mill in 1954, earning 24 shillings per week

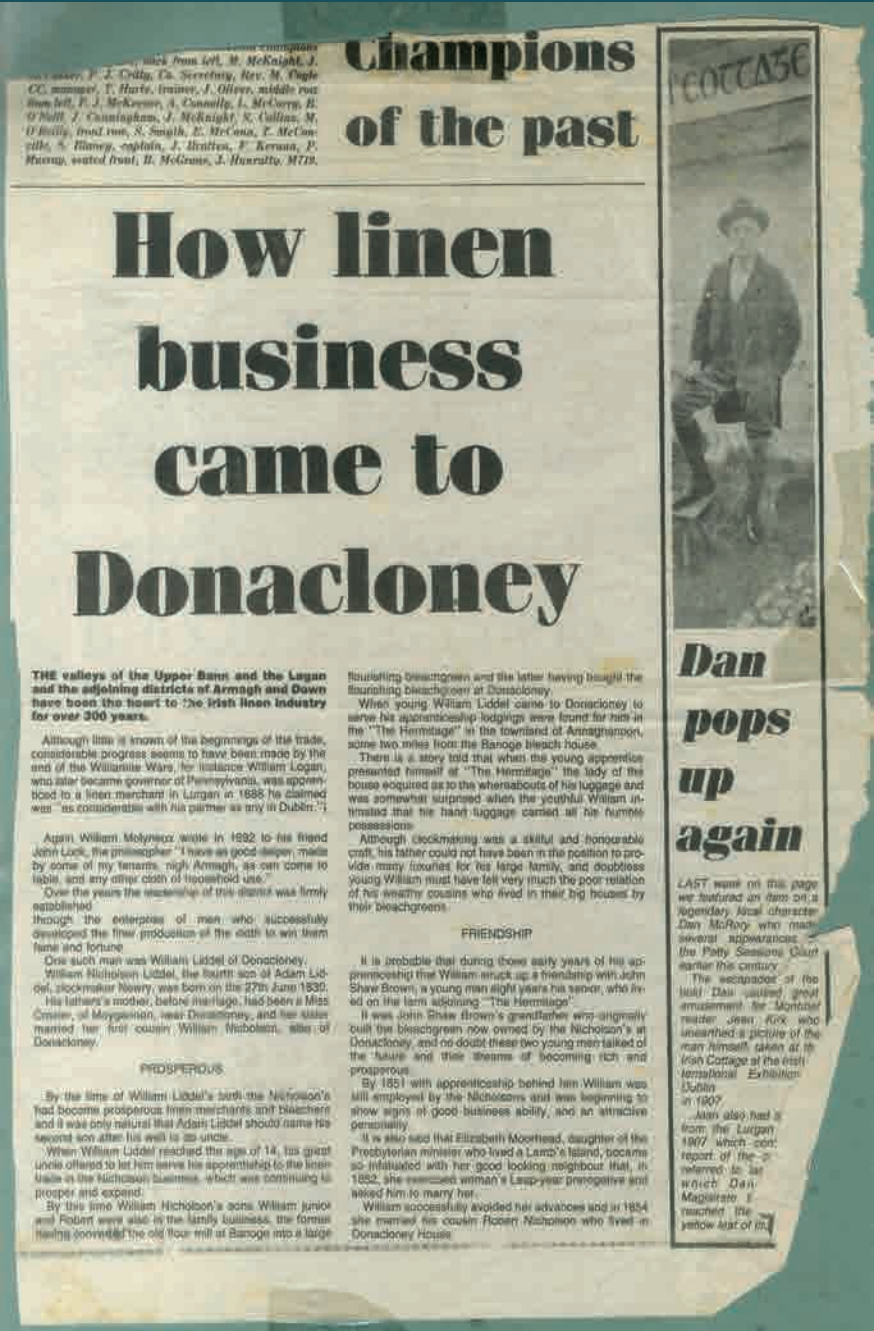
“Campbells was spotless, totally in order Col. Henshaw kept everything in order”

**Ruth Irvine** who worked in Doagh spinning where they were

“the wet spinning girls, and did the work in their bare feet”

The common thread of conversation buzzing around the Orange Hall was **WILLIAM LIDDELL** was...

“..a man before his time”.



ROADSHOW 2

# DONACLONEY

14th September 2017

The second roadshow was located in Donacloney, the home town of the **WILLIAM LIDDELL** factory.

Following local enquiries for a suitable venue the Orange Hall, located in the middle of the village was used, inviting the community to drop by, have a cup of tea and bring any memorabilia and stories related to the **WILLIAM LIDDELL** industry. Special thanks to **Councillor Mark Baxter** for instigating this excellent connection to the local community and spreading the word.

**Dr Catherine O'Hara**, design historian at **ULSTER UNIVERSITY** assisted with this Donacloney event, her expertise was valued having recently completed her thesis examining the role and status of design in Ulster's Interwar linen industry with **OLD BLEACH LINEN COMPANY**, Randalstown.

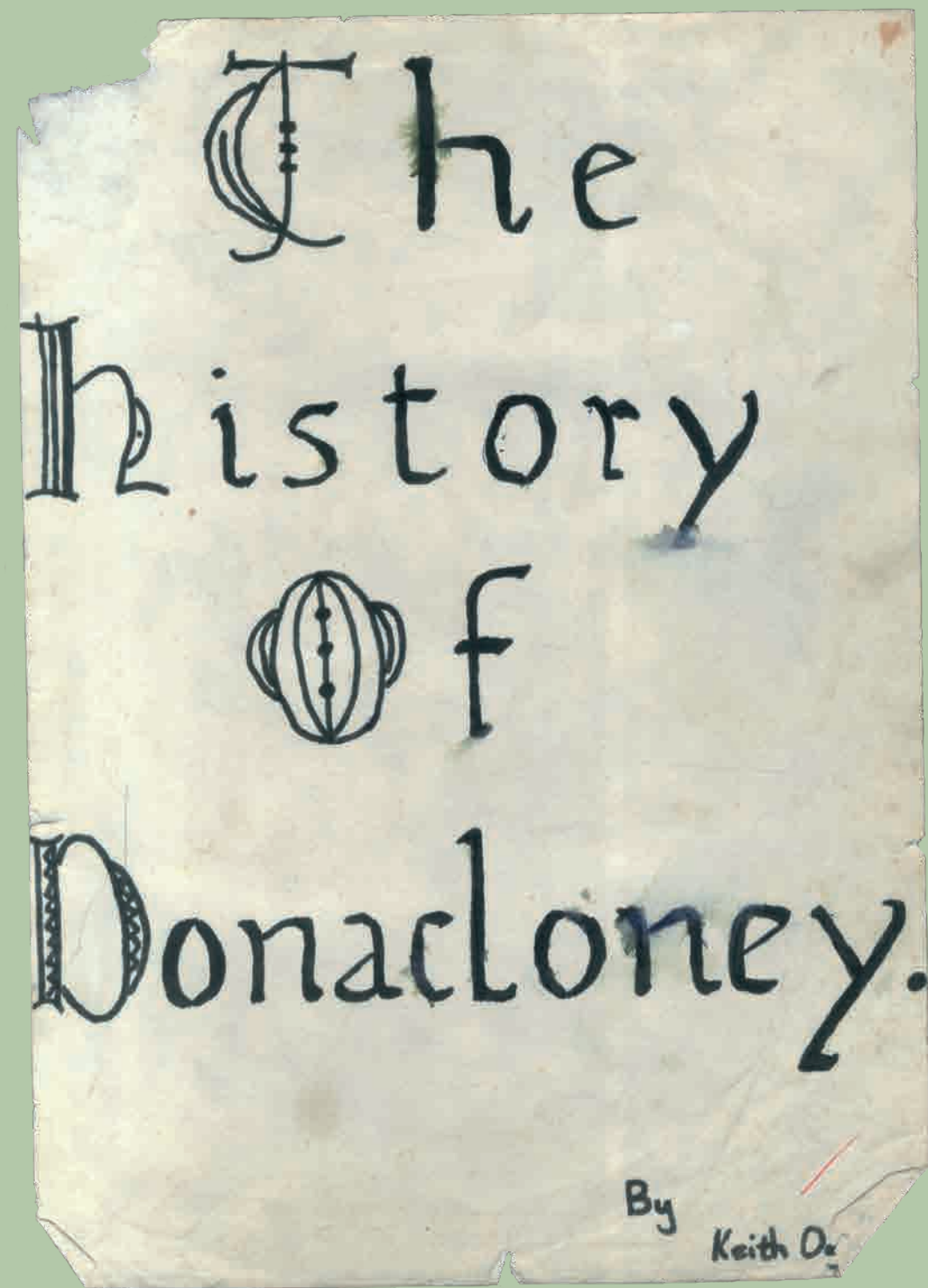
Families often worked together in the mill, fathers, brothers, wives and daughters enjoyed the work, often being there for their entire working lives and missing the camaraderie once it was gone. A wide range of photographs were left for anyone involved in the company to take away and share among family members not able to attend.

A great community spirit prevailed throughout the day, as visitors caught up with old colleagues and told stories of their work together. **Jim Dennison**, who had worked at several mills through his career, described Liddell's as the friendliest, whilst also being very efficient, with pride taken in doing a good job. **Alison Davidson** brought a scrap book, highlighting several newspaper reports connected to the **WILLIAM LIDDELL COMPANY**, a testament of the pride of the people of Donacloney.

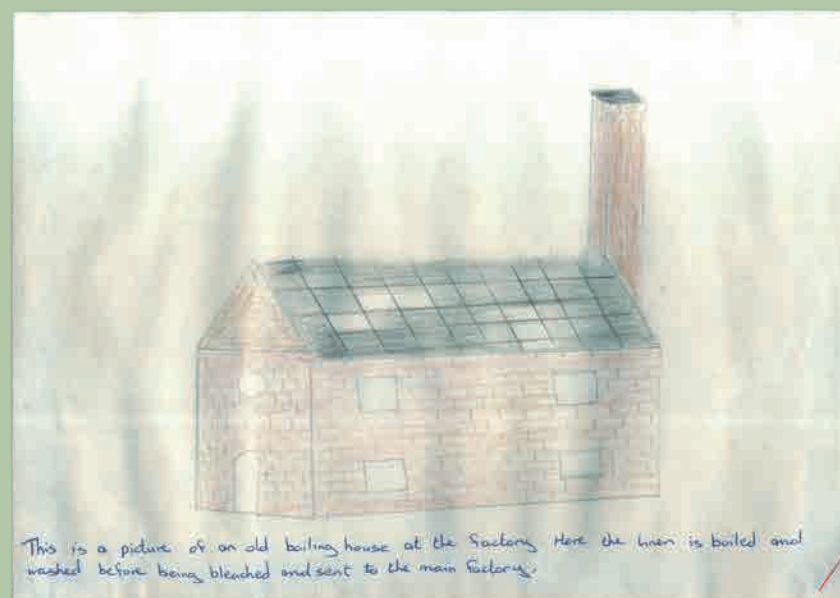


Events were well recorded at the Liddell factory, in particular in honour of longevity of service. **Hilda Ferguson** provided a photograph of her father **Frank Finlay** presenting **Thomas Archer** with a leaving gift on his retirement, Frank was very proud to be in charge of the **CARD** room.



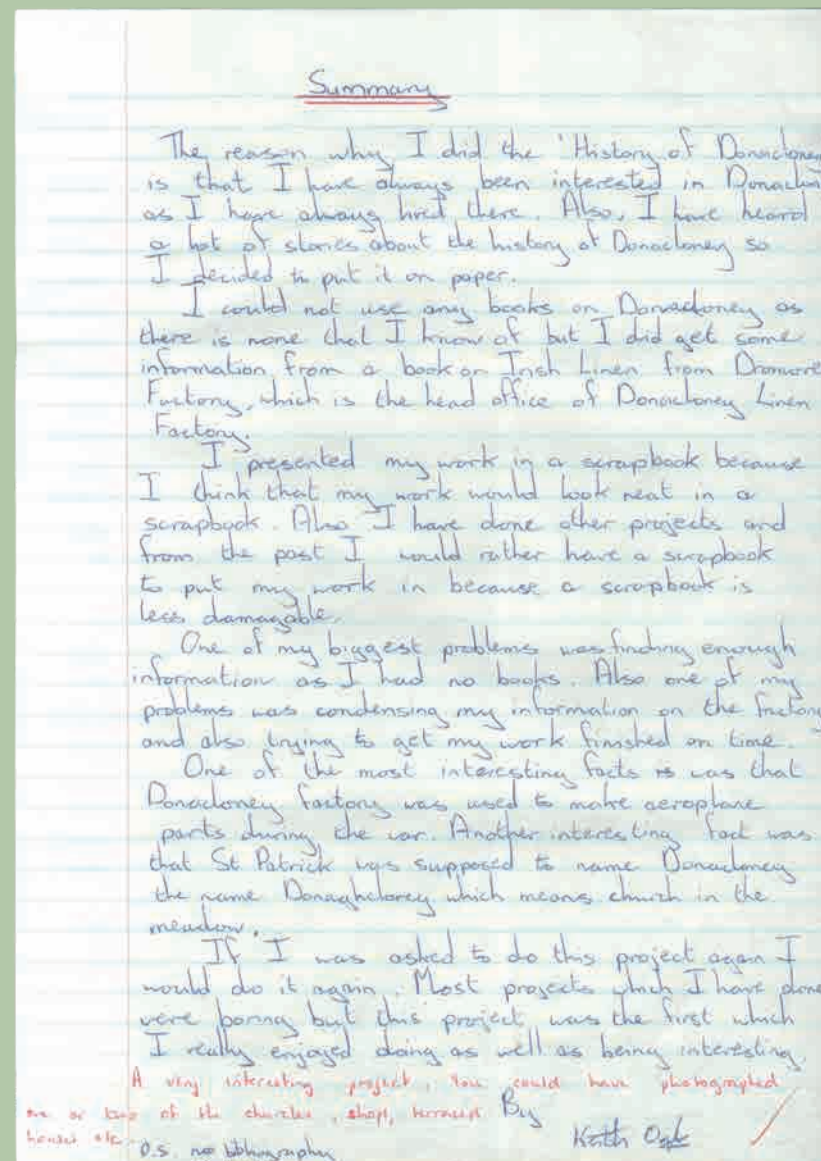
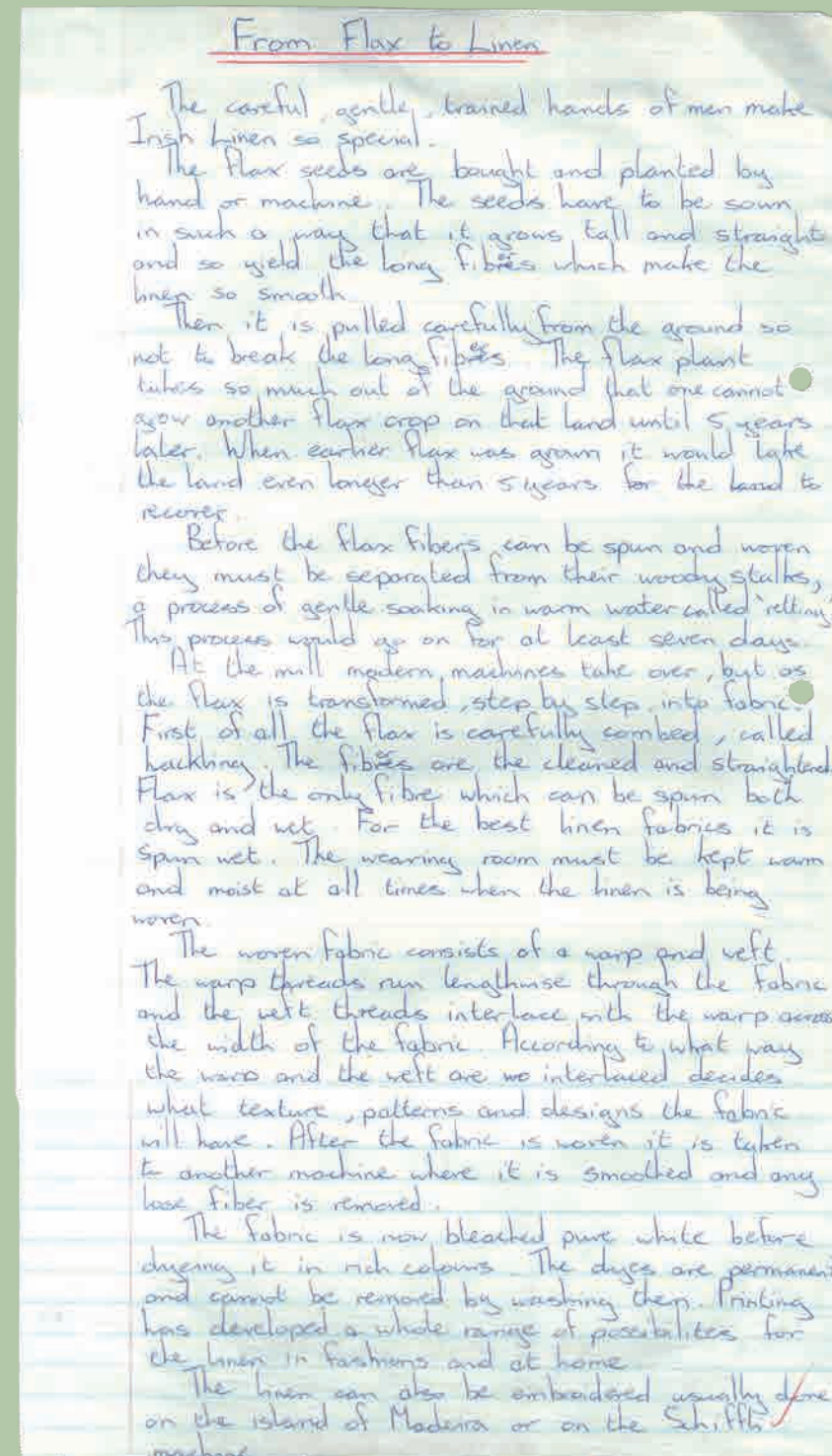


“One of the most interesting facts was that Donacloney factory was used to make aeroplane parts during the war”

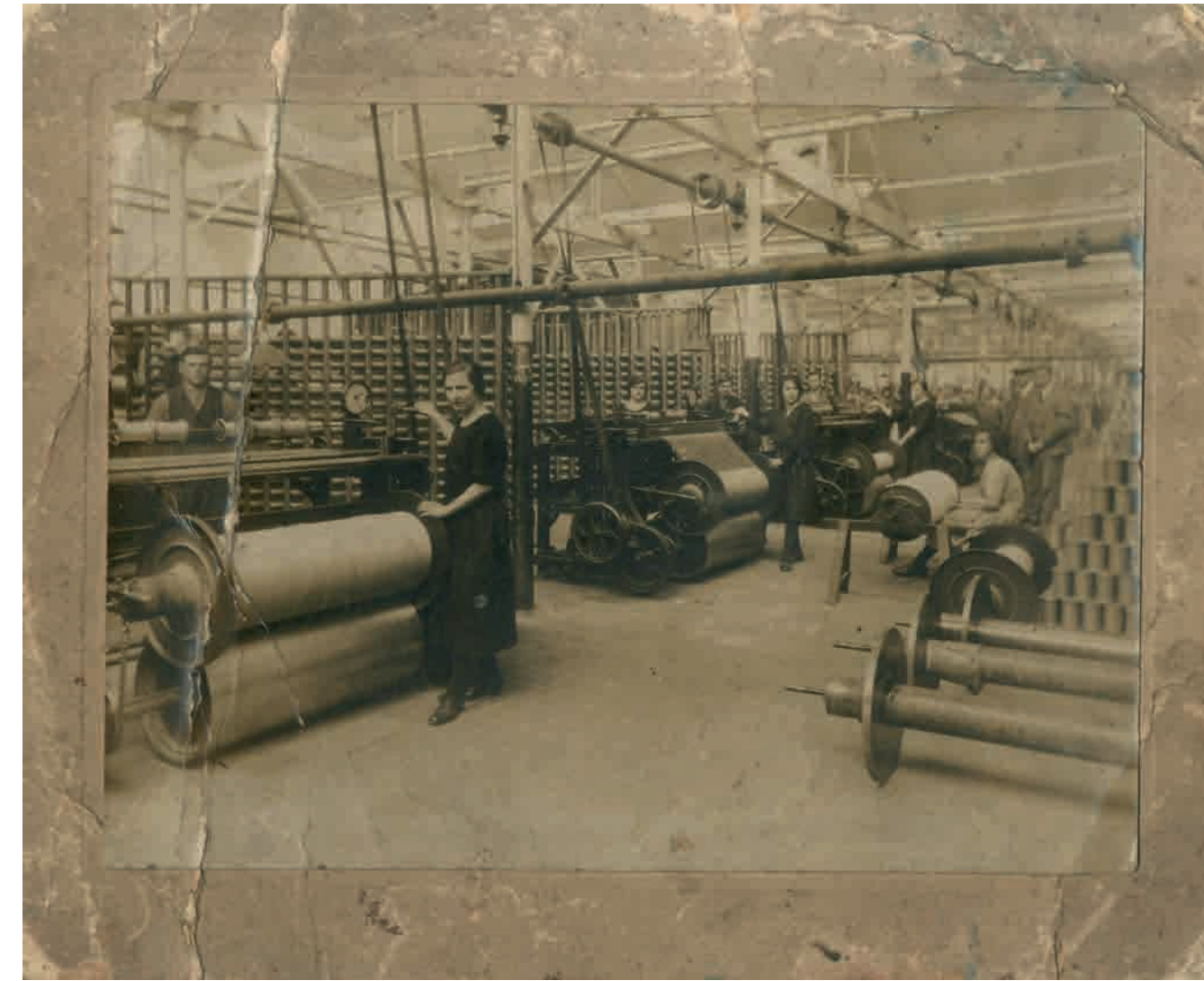


Keith Ogle brought the most wonderful information in the form of a school project from 1983, “The History of Donacloney” what a gem this was to read, as seen through the eyes of a youngster.

The mark awarded for Philips project was 17/20

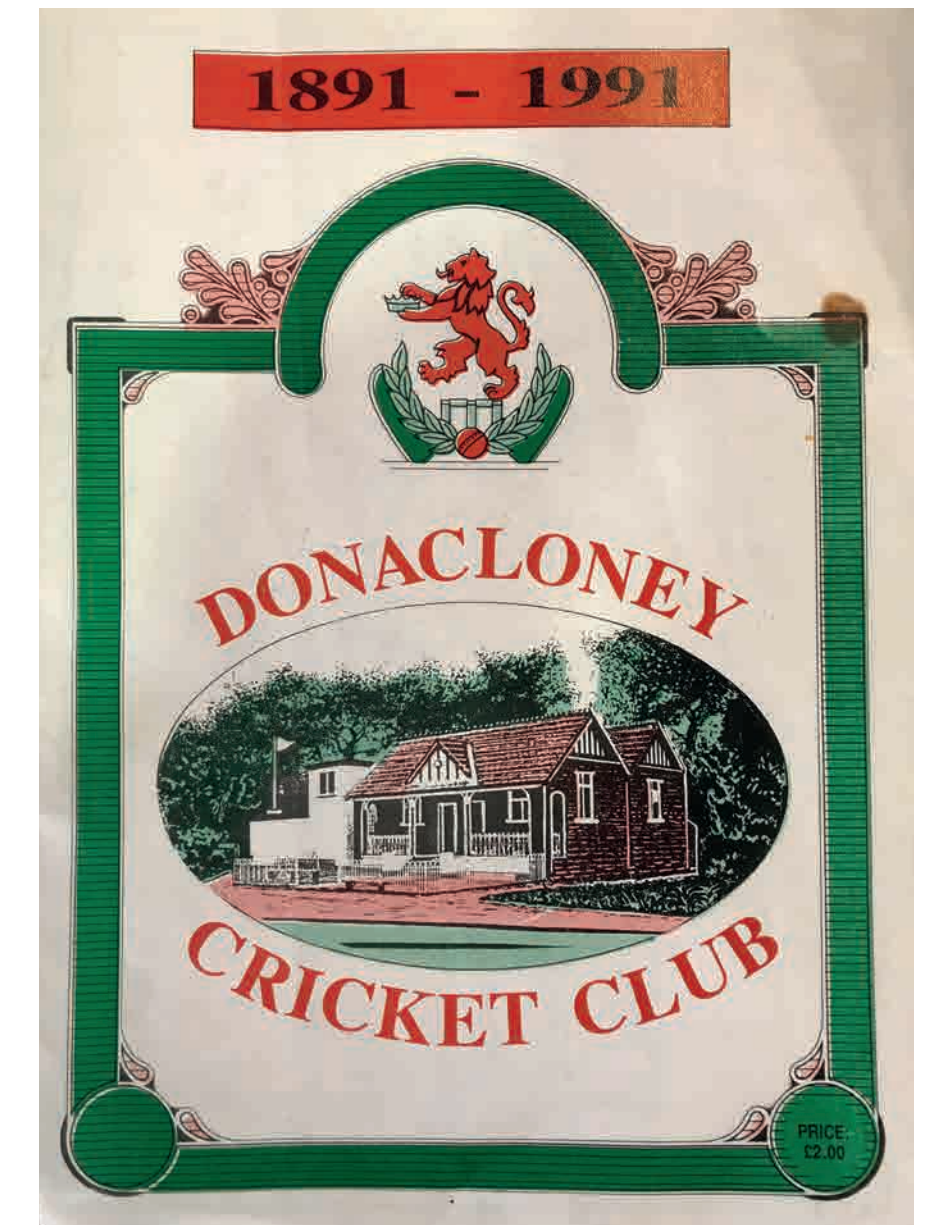


A glimpse into the weaving ladies attire is evident in an evocative photograph recorded from Alison Davidsons scrapbook.



Visitors brought in examples of high quality linen, some in original packaging, often having been received by their parents as wedding presents and never used.

The company built housing for the mill workers in the late 1800’s with indoor flushing toilets; unknown at this time. Liddell’s dynamic approach to his workforce was discussed aplenty in the Orange Hall in 2017, with modern-day fringe benefits such as a staff dining room, a pension scheme, the village primary school and playing fields warranting particular praise. Furthermore, unusually for Ireland, a cricket club was established and this was referenced in some of the documentation:



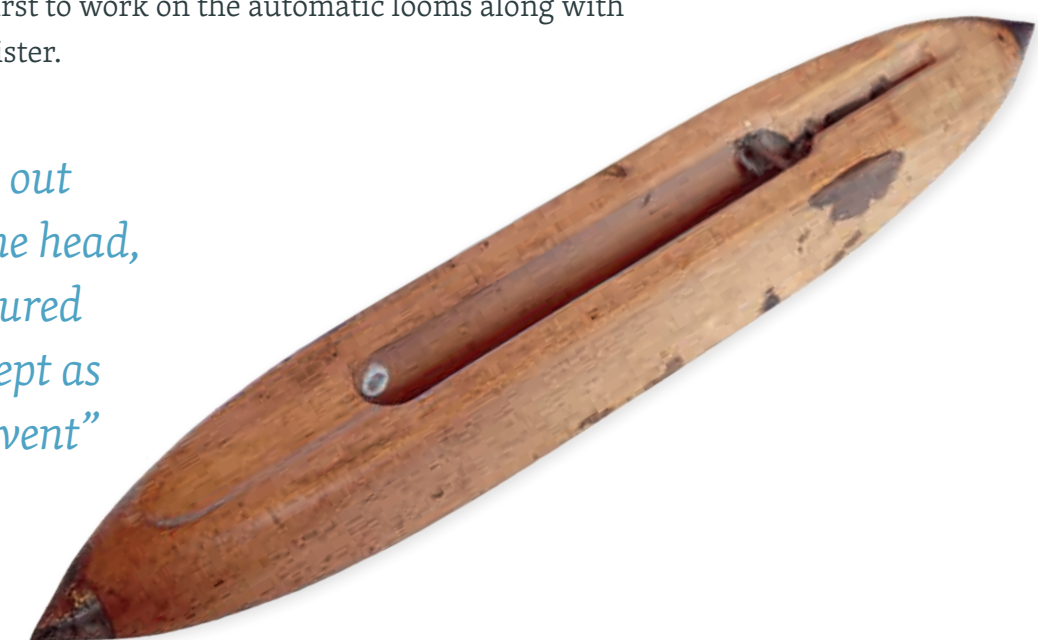
Fred Weir spoke fondly of the mini bus that collected the workers, he also proudly reminisced that in 1975 “the mill bought the first brand new Dorniers” and he was the man sent to England for training. This investment by Liddell shows a foreword thinking company as Dornier were a progressive German weaving textile company, who first made their name as manufacturers of aircraft but diversified to textile machinery after the first world war.

Throughout any conversation about the workforce at Liddells one gentleman’s name was always mentioned with the upmost respect. Kenny Allen “he’s yer man to meet”. Towards the end of the day we were delighted that Kenny Allen gently arrived, with his granddaughter, quiet at first, Kenny was soon immersed browsing through scrapbooks, reminiscing and generally being the star of the roadshow. Kenny started work at 15 and retired in 1997 after 51 years. He became general manager of Ewart Liddell. Mr Allen sadly passed away on January 3<sup>rd</sup> 2018, the project is honoured he came to the Donacloney event and share the passion he felt for the company.

The longevity of peoples working lives with Liddell’s was evident throughout the day, Carole Harland’s mother Sadie Beckett (now 95) worked at the mill from the age of 16 to 65, she was a weaver and would have been responsible for 6-8 small looms. She became one of the first to work on the automatic looms along with Maggie Allen and Fred Weir’s sister.

“This shuttle once flew out and hit someone on the head, they weren’t badly injured and the shuttle was kept as this was an unusual event”

Sadie loved her job at the mill.





High quality linen was shared -like this gold award winning example.



# LIDDELL FAMILY TREE

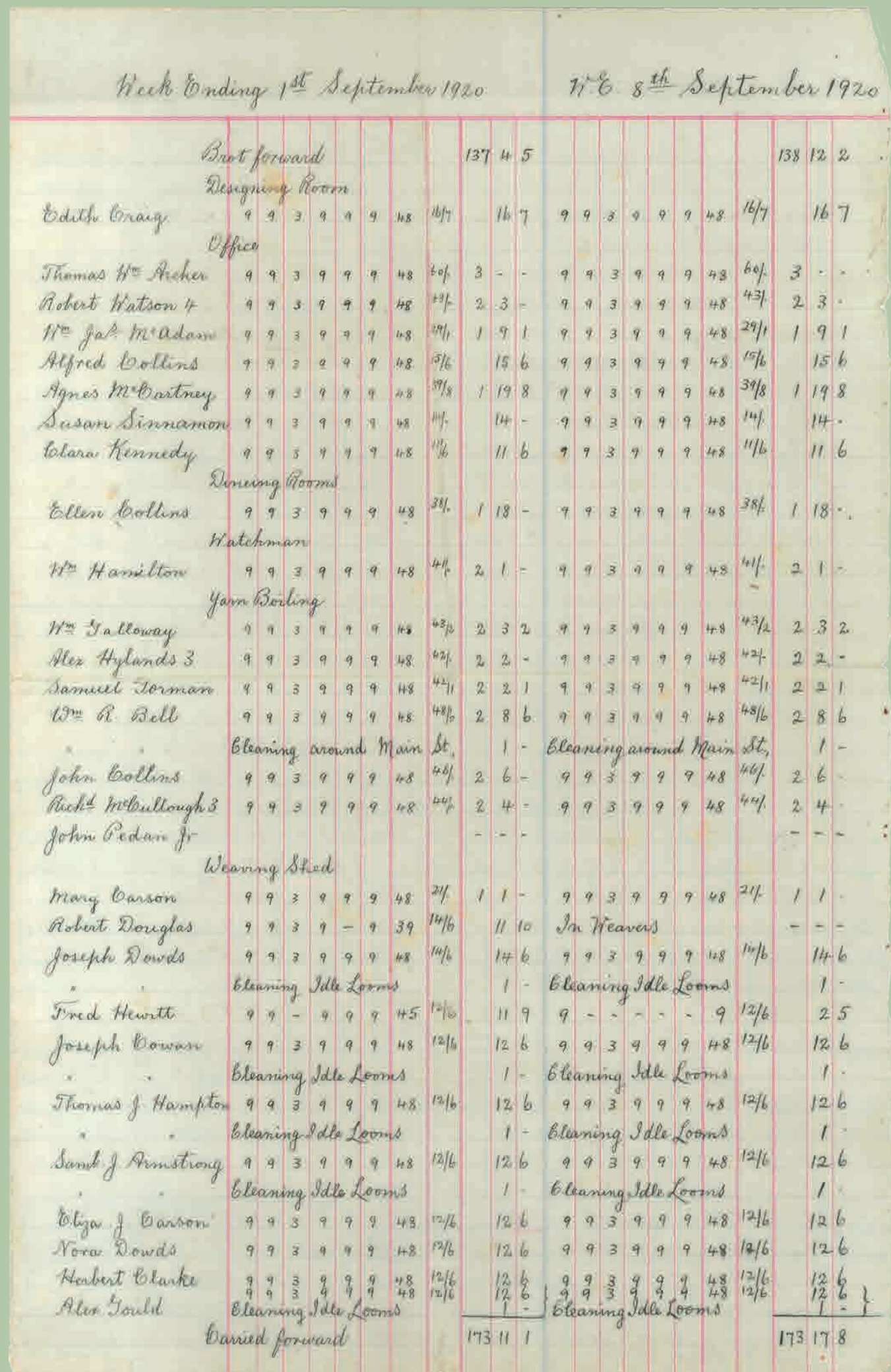
William Nicholson Liddell, JP. = Georgina Morris  
1830-1901 d. 1917

**BANOGE HOUSE**

```
graph TD
    WNL["William Nicholson Liddell, JP.  
1830-1901"] --- GM["Georgina Morris  
d. 1917"]
    WNL --- GM
    WNL --- GM --- L1_Line[ ]
    L1_Line --- W["William  
1861-1897"]
    L1_Line --- H["Henry  
1866-1931  
London Manager"]
    L1_Line --- SRL["Sir Robert Morris Liddell, DL, JP.  
1870-1928  
BANOGHE HOUSE"]
    L1_Line --- CE["Charles Edward  
1874-1953  
Australia"]

    SRL --- L2_Line[ ]
    L2_Line --- G["Georgina  
= Lt. Col. R.J. Carruthers"]
    L2_Line --- CL["Charlotte  
= Howard Stevenson  
FRCS"]
    L2_Line --- W2["William  
BANOGHE HOUSE"]
    L2_Line --- C["Cynthia  
= James Carr"]
    L2_Line --- RM["Robert Morris  
= (1) Doreen McGagh  
= (2) Margaret Wilson"]
    L2_Line --- CHA["Charles Henry Ashbrooke"]

    W --- PWSC["Patrick William  
Stuart Carruthers  
BANOGHE HOUSE"]
    CL --- HMS["Howard Morris  
Stevenson  
FRCS"]
    CL --- GS["Gerald  
Stevenson"]
    C --- JC["James  
Carr"]
    C --- DC["Derek  
Carr"]
    RM --- RDL["Robert Donald  
Liddell"]
```



# LISBURN

Thursday 9th November 2017

[illegible]

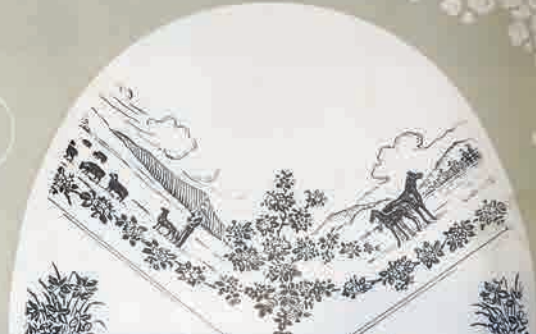
A Linen Gold medal from Paris 1867.

**"SPRINGTIME IN IRELAND"** (1897)

*This Characteristic example of Irish Linen Double Damask symbolizes both in design and material, the joys of the Season with all its purity, freshness, life and hope, and recalls the poet's lines —*

*Is like the Birthday of the World  
When earth was born in bloom  
The light is made of many dyes,  
The air is all perfume.*

*There's crimson buds and white and blue  
The very rainbow showers  
Have turned to blossoms where they fell,  
And sown the earth with flowers*



**"SHAMROCK" LINENS**

PATENT 7917





**Liam Ewing** was proud to present several excellent photographs of his father demonstrating to **Anthony Armstrong Jones** the testing of linen fibre, this royal visit was as a result of receiving the Queens award for Industry, while working at Lambeg testing laboratory.

**Fiona McKelvie** returned to bring the only examples brought in of original drawings on point paper, a method used for translating designs into the correct format for Damask weaving.

